The Golden Thread

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THE GOLDEN THREAD

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BLESSING THE LIGHTS

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THE GOLDEN THREAD

BY

S. DAVIS & M. KAYE

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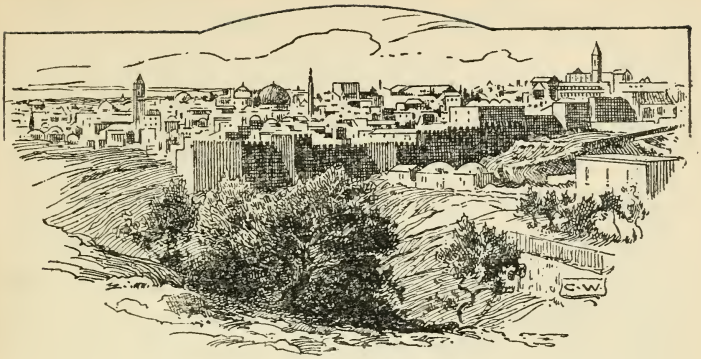


THE GOLDEN THREAD

THE WONDER STORY OF THE WORLD

In all parts of the world there live numbers of Jews. They obey the laws of the land in which they live, and they do the same kind of work as other people. But in their faith they are different. They keep together as one people, believing in the same God and praying to Him in their own way. We all want to know where they came from and what it is that keeps them together. We shall tell you something of their story in these pages.

The story of the Jews runs like a golden thread woven into the history of mankind. It is the wonder story of the world. It is the story of a people which has been kept alive through the ages, while the mightiest of

nations have passed away; it is the story which tells how men came to know about God; it is the story of—ourselves.

The history of the Jews begins in the ages of long, long ago, with the life of a great man who knew of the true God—long, long ago in the dim past—long, long ago when the people prayed to idols of wood and stone, and to fire and to animals; and when wickedness filled the earth.

This man was Abraham. From him the knowledge passed to his son Isaac, and from Isaac to *his* son Jacob, who was also called Israel. He was the father of the Israelites, the name by which we were known after the time of Jacob. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are called our forefathers. God promised them that their offspring or families would grow in numbers until they became a great nation, and that He would give them the land of Canaan to be their own.

You will read in this book how Jacob and his family went to live in Egypt, and how, as the years rolled on, the family grew into a nation. You will read how these people were made to work as slaves, and how they

were led forth to freedom by the greatest leader in history, Moses, who taught them to love God and do right.

After many years the Israelites settled down in the land that had become their own. It was a good land, a land of mountains and green hills and pleasant valleys, of brooks and streams and flowing rivers, of forests and pastures, of fruit gardens, vineyards and golden cornfields; and the heart of the Jew has ever turned to it with love and longing.

The Israelites tilled the soil and kept sheep and cattle. Their first rulers were called Judges. Later on they had kings, one of whom was King David. They had fine cities. The chief one was Jerusalem. In this city one of the kings named Solomon set up a great building known as the Temple, where people came together to serve God.

We speak of the land given by God to His people as the Holy Land. It is also known as Palestine.

The Israelites were also called Hebrews. They spoke the language which we use when we pray, and which every child should learn, in order to understand the beautiful prayers.

After a time many enemies rose up against the Israelites, who fought hard to keep their land safe and free. In the end they were attacked by the Romans who made themselves masters of the country. Many Israelites were killed or taken as slaves, and many others made their homes in new countries. This was nearly two thousand years ago. Since then they have spread over the whole world.

They have often been treated cruelly. Much that is false has been said about them. Often people have tried to make them give up their religion. Even to-day in some countries their lives are hard and bitter. But all through the ages they have kept to their faith. They have ever formed one brotherhood that nothing could break, for it was held together by the hand of the living God.

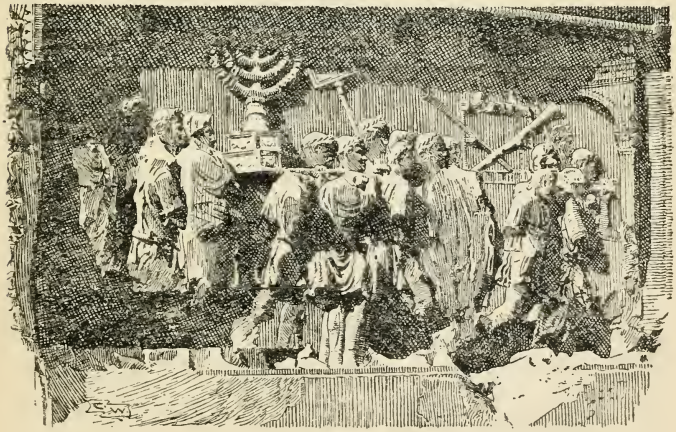
Many years ago, England and France, and, earlier still, Holland, gave the Jews equal freedom with the rest of the people of those lands. America has always welcomed them, because it was ever a free country.

The Jews have served their rulers bravely,

faithfully and well, giving them their best in work, in ideas and in courage.

The wonder story is not yet finished. It is for us to see that the future shall match the glory of the past.

A new chapter is beginning at the time when this book is being written. A great war has just finished, and, led by the English, the great nations of the world have agreed that the Jews shall have the right once more to a safe home in the Holy Land, the ancient land of their forefathers.



A ROMAN PROCESSION CARRYING THE SPOILS OF THE TEMPLE
(From the Arch of Titus, Rome)

THE BIBLE

THE BEST BOOK IN THE WORLD

WHAT are the things that have kept the Jews together through all the ages, through times of gladness and sorrow, through times of good and ill fortune, through times of peace and war? They are our belief in the one true God, our ideas of right and wrong, the knowledge of our great history, and our customs and our ways of life.

All these things flow from a book of which we Jews are proud, for it is the best book in the whole world. It has been written by Jews and it is called the Bible, or the Book of Books, as we sometimes speak of it. So much of our lives is bound up with it, that we are often called the "People of the Book."

It is not really a single book, but a whole set of books in one. It was written in Hebrew, the language spoken by the Jews, and was put together when they lived in the Holy Land. It was written when most of the

people of the world prayed to idols, and thought chiefly of hunting and robbing and fighting and killing. Yet it is full of everlasting wisdom and full of the noblest and best thoughts; for all that is in it has come from the spirit of God.

The first part is called the "Five Books of Moses." This gives the history of the Israelites until the death of Moses, and tells how God made Himself known to His people. It also contains the God-given laws under which the Israelites lived, and which have guided our lives ever since.

Other parts of the Bible give the history of the times after Moses.

But, besides this, there are in the Bible the writings of holy men called Prophets. They were filled with God's spirit and could see into the future. They urged the people to do what was right. They wrote down messages that came to them from God, in words that were full of poetry and beauty. Often they were the bearers of awful words of warning.

There are other writings in this book, such as the Proverbs, which contain much wisdom;

and the Psalms, which are the best and the holiest and the most beautiful songs ever written.

We have always loved and treasured this book, for it is a Jewish book. We read it in the Synagogue and in our homes. Many parts of it are used in our prayers. It cheers us in our lonely hours; it gives us help and comfort in times of trouble; it leads us in the paths of kindness, peace and rest.

This book became known to other peoples. It has been translated into every language. It is the gift of the Israelites to mankind.

All over the world, in the towns and in the villages and in the lonely country places, among the mountains and the hills and in the valleys, in the palaces of kings and in the homes of the lowly, in the far-off settlements and on the ships that cross the trackless ocean, this Book is to be found. Its clear message rings out over the whole world. It brings hope and help and comfort and love and peace to all hearts.

THIS HOLY BOOK

THIS holy book I'd rather own,
  Than all the gold and gems
That e'er in monarchs' coffers shone,
  Than all their diadems.

The soul has never found relief
  In glittering hoards of wealth;
Gems dazzle not the eye of grief,
  Gold cannot purchase health.

But here a blessed balm appears
  To heal the deepest woe,
And those who read this book in tears,
  Their tears shall cease to flow.

Adapted from Horatius Bonar.

ABRAHAM

THE FIRST TRUTH OF THE JEWISH RELIGION

ABRAHAM, the first Hebrew, was not born in the Holy Land, but in a land far away from it, called Chaldea. His father's name was Terah.

His family, and the people among whom he lived, knew nothing of the true God. They believed in many gods and bowed down to idols of wood and stone.

But Abraham was wiser. When he looked at the wonders of Nature, the sun, the moon, the stars, the trees, the flowers, and the birds, and when he thought of the light following

the darkness and the darkness following the light, he saw how foolish it was to believe that images had any power over the world. He saw that the world must have a Maker, and that there must be *one* Mind and *one* Spirit which ruled over all. He thus found out for himself the first truth of the Jewish religion, that there is one God, the Maker of the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that is in them.

When, too, he beheld the beauty of Nature and saw how wonderfully everything fitted in with our lives, he knew that God was a God of kindness, and there grew up in his heart a great love for his Maker. He would have nothing to do with the false gods of his people.

It would have been easier for him to do the same as the people around him, but he was brave. He followed the call of his own heart, even though he stood alone. It must have been hard for him to tell his neighbours and his family, that what they did was not right. They were much bound up with their idols, and would hardly listen to him. Abraham must have been unhappy about it,

but he kept to his own straight path. He did not falter in his faith and in his love of God.

When he was already an old man, seventy-five years of age, a wondrous change came into his life. God Himself appeared to Abraham and bade him leave his home and go to a new country, the Land of Canaan. God also told Abraham that he would have children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and in time his family would grow into a nation to which God would give the Land of Canaan. This nation would be a blessing to all the people of the earth. Indeed, Abraham was chosen to be the father of a great people which was to teach all the nations of the world the truth about God.

The task was not a light one. Though he was old, he had to tear himself away from his country. But the hardest task becomes easy when it is born of faith and love. Abraham at once obeyed. Taking with him his wife Sarah and his nephew Lot, he set out for an unknown country to begin a new life among strangers.

"HE SET OUT FOR A NEW COUNTRY"

Both Abraham and Lot owned many sheep and oxen and servants, and it was a big company that went with Abraham. When he came to Canaan, he wandered from place to place, to find grass-lands for his cattle. He went north and south and east and west. He viewed the pastures and the hills and the plains and the streams.

Now that he was away from his home, it was easier for him to speak out the truth that was in him. Strangers are often more ready to listen to a man than the people who have known him all their lives. Wherever he set up his tent as he went through the land, he taught the people about the true God.

It is not only Abraham whom God has called to go forth and bring blessings to others. He calls every one of us at some time. We may not really hear His words, but we feel them in our hearts. Like Abraham, we must ever be ready to obey the Divine call.

ABRAHAM AND ISAAC

THE LOVE OF GOD THAT WAS PERFECT

ONE day, Abraham was sitting at the door of his tent in the heat of the day and he saw three men coming towards him. He welcomed them with gentle words and invited them to sit down and rest, while cool water from a well was brought to them so that they could wash and refresh themselves. He then had a nice meal served to them. This they ate as they sat in the shade of a tree just outside his tent.

The men were really angels or messengers

of God. They had come with the glad news that Sarah would soon have a son. She herself was in the tent, and when she heard the words, she laughed at the idea of having a little boy of her own after she had grown so old.

But in time a dear little boy was born. Abraham called him Isaac, which is the Hebrew word for "laughing." This son was everything in the world to Abraham. In him were bound up all the hopes for the future. As he grew up, it was seen that he was a worthy son of his great father.

When Isaac had grown into a lad, strong and true, loving and lovable, it was God's wish that Abraham should go through a trial; a trial so great and so awful, that the wonder of it would be echoed through the ages; a trial that was to show his children's children for ever, a trust and a faith and a love of God that were perfect.

If there is one thing which we hold dearer than our own lives, it is the life of our best-beloved. Abraham's trial was no less than to be asked to give up the life of his beloved son, Isaac.

God called to him and said, "Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and offer him up as a burnt offering upon one of the mountains of which I will tell thee."

Although his heart was near to breaking, Abraham spoke no word of complaint. His one thought was to obey and he did not falter.

He rose up in the morning before the dawn and set out on the journey with Isaac and two men-servants.

They went through miles and miles of rough country, ever climbing as they struggled towards the mountain top. Abraham had plenty of time to change his mind. Twice did the sun set on the hills, the golden western sky turning into twilight grey and then into the cold darkness of the night. Three times the grey morning broke out of the darkness of night and turned again to gold as the day dawned. On, on they went. In the sunshine or in the darkness, Abraham never turned from his purpose.

On the third day they came in sight of the mountain top. Abraham left the two men-servants behind while he and Isaac went

forward. He wanted to be alone with his beloved son in the last holy moments.

Isaac took up the wood, which he slung across his shoulders, and in his hands he carried a small pan of fire and a knife. When he looked at these things he was puzzled and said—

"My father, I see the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"

Abraham turned his head away, for he was troubled. He could not bear to tell Isaac what was to happen.

"My son," he replied, "God will find for Himself a burnt offering." So they went on together.

They came to the top and there Abraham built an altar. With trembling hands he bound Isaac and laid him upon the wood on the altar. Then he put forth his hand for the knife to slay his son.

Just then an angel of the Lord called to him from heaven, "Abraham, Abraham, lay not thine hand upon the lad. Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing that thou hast not kept back thy son, thine only son, from Him."

"THERE ABRAHAM BUILT AN ALTAR"

The trial was finished. It was a happy relief to the sorely tried father. He set his son free. At that moment he noticed a ram caught by its horns in the bushes near by, and he offered it up in place of his son.

God now told Abraham once more that his family would become a great nation, not only itself to be blessed, but bringing a blessing to the whole world.

If we wish to understand something of the meaning of this story, let us think of a golden ornament fresh from the hands of its maker. He takes it to a hall where its purity is tested and a mark is stamped upon it. The maker knows of its purity. For him the hall-mark matters little, but it shows all who see it how pure is the gold of which the ornament is made.

In the same way God Himself knew Abraham's heart, but He proved Abraham and set His seal on him for ever, so that all who came after him would know how great was the soul and how perfect was the faith of him who was the first of the race chosen by God to be His own people.

STORIES OF ABRAHAM'S YOUTH

THE Jews have other ancient books besides the Bible. In one of them we read about Abraham, and how, when he was young, his thoughts were led to the true God.

Once, on a lovely summer day, Abraham tried to look at the sun, but it was so bright that his eyes were dazzled. It seemed so wonderful, that he said to himself, "Perhaps the sun is the God of the world."

In the evening the sun passed away and the twinkling stars came into the heaven, shedding their soft beautiful light. As he looked at them in the far-away, never-ending spaces, Abraham wondered whether the stars were the gods of the world. Yet when the dawn broke, the stars faded away and the sun came forth again in all its glory.

Another evening, Abraham watched the moon, which turned the whole earth to silver as it sailed slowly across the skies, and he then asked himself whether the moon was God.

He spent much time in thinking of these things. At last he saw that neither the sun

nor the stars nor yet the moon were gods; but that there was one Spirit which set them all in motion and ruled over the whole Universe.

. . . . . .

Abraham's father, Terah, was a maker of idols. He kept them in a large room. Men and women came to pray to them and even to make offerings to them. Others would come to buy idols for themselves.

One day Terah left his son to take care of the idols. As Abraham looked round, he thought how foolish people were to pray to these images of wood and stone.

He took a hammer and knocked off the heads and hands and feet of all except one. Then he put the hammer into the hand of this idol and waited for his father to return.

Of course Terah was very angry when he saw what had been done. He asked Abraham to tell him what had been the cause of it. Abraham pointed to the idol with the hammer in its hand and said, "That idol did it!" Now Terah knew very well that an idol could not use its hands, and so he began to see the folly of praying to an image.

The news of this deed came to the ears of the King, whose name was Nimrod. He also prayed to idols. He sent for Abraham and said—

"You must *pray* to the images."

"I will *not*," said Abraham.

"Then pray to fire," said the King.

"Would it not be better to pray to water? Water can put out fire." said Abraham.

"Very well," answered Nimrod, "pray to water."

Abraham then said, "Why should I not pray to the clouds? They give us water."

The King said he was willing that Abraham should worship the clouds.

"Why not pray to the wind?" went on Abraham. "See how strong is the wind, and how it drives the clouds across the sky."

"Very well," answered Nimrod, "pray to the wind."

Then Abraham said in a firm voice—

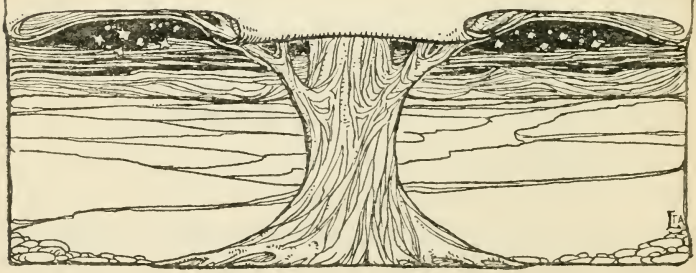
"O King, I will pray neither to the idols, nor to the fire, nor the water, nor the clouds, nor the wind. I will pray only to the Almighty Who made them all. He is the true God."

THE HAND DIVINE

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork.—PSALM XIX.

SOON as the evening shades prevail
The moon takes up the wondrous tale,
And nightly to the listening earth
Repeats the story of her birth;
Whilst all the stars that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings, as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole. . .
For ever singing as they shine,
"The Hand that made us is Divine."

J. Addison.



ESAU AND JACOB

PART I.—A HASTY BARGAIN

When Isaac grew to manhood, he married a God-fearing woman from among his kinsfolk. Her name was Rebekah. They had two sons, named Esau and Jacob.

The brothers were not at all alike. Esau was a wild, careless fellow. He liked nothing better than to take his bow and arrow and follow the track of the deer over the hills and through the woods and hunt it down. He gave no thought to the future, so long as he had enough for his wants at the time. There have ever been boys like him. They leave the comfort of a home to seek adventures in the wild places of the world. They are good-natured and lovable, quick to get angry, and quick to forgive, but they are not always the best fitted to carry out some great work in life, which needs steadiness and patience.

Esau married a woman of a people who had idols for their gods, and he brought sorrow

to his mother and father. Yet Isaac loved this happy-go-lucky son very dearly. He had always loved the scent of the fields. He loved too, the venison, as we call the flesh of the deer, which Esau often brought to him when he came home from hunting.

Jacob was different from his brother. He loved his home and seldom wandered away from the pastures around the tents where he lived. He was always ready to do as he was told, and to help in looking after the flocks and the herds of his father. His life was one of peace and quietness. He was ever thoughtful of the future. He was often with his mother, and it is no wonder that Rebekah loved Jacob as much as Isaac loved Esau.

Esau being the elder, had the right to become the chief of the family when Isaac died. This meant, also, the right to have all that belonged to his father—his flocks and his herds and his tents. On him should have fallen the duty of bringing up his family in such a way as to lead it on to the future greatness promised by God. But we see that he was not the best fitted for this high duty.

One day he came home from hunting, feeling very tired and hungry. He found Jacob cooking some food and asked for some of it to eat. Jacob saw the chance of making Esau give up his birthright, that is, all his rights as elder brother. So he said—

"Sell me first your birthright."

Esau, thinking only of his want of food, agreed. He said, "I am nearly dying of hunger, and what good will the birthright do for me?"

We are not told what price Jacob paid for

the birthright, but the bargain was not a fair one. It was forced on Esau when he was faint and hungry.

It was wrong of Jacob to make profit out of his brother's hunger. But he must have seen how unfit Esau was to become the head of the family. Esau might have been ready at a future time to give up all that he had, perhaps to a stranger, in return for something that he wanted at once. In this way he would lose all that had been saved up by Abraham and Isaac. Things like this happen in some families even in these days.

The lesson to us is clear. If we do not prize a precious gift, we have no right to it. It is sad to think that there are many people like Esau who turn away from the gifts of God, for the sake of food, or clothes, or pleasures, which soon pass away. Esau did not understand the value of his birthright and the promise of future greatness. He would not have made the best use of it, and it was better that it should pass into the hands of his brother Jacob.

PART II.—THE TWO BLESSINGS

JACOB'S claim to Esau's birthright was made stronger by what happened later on in their lives.

Isaac had become a very old man. His eyes were so dim with age that he was almost blind. He felt he could not live much longer. Before he died, he wished to place his hands on the head of his beloved son Esau, and, with a prayer to God, give him a last blessing.

Besides the power of the prayer of the pious old man, there was something more in the blessing. He who received it would become the head of the family and master of all the household, after Isaac had passed away.

It was the custom in those days, as well as in later times, for holy meals to be eaten at great and solemn moments. Holy meals were eaten by the Israelites when they brought offerings to God. At such times their thoughts turned very earnestly to God and they felt His spirit stronger within them.

Before giving his blessing to Esau, Isaac

wished to partake of such a meal. So he called Esau and bade him go forth into the fields and hunt a deer.

"Make ready for me," he said, "a dish of meat such as I love, so that my soul may bless thee before I die."

Rebekah heard these words, but she wanted the blessing to be given to her best-beloved son. All her life she seemed to feel that Jacob was the greater of the brothers. In her mother's heart she knew that he was better fitted to receive the blessing. This led her to do a great wrong, for she made a plan to deceive Isaac.

There was not a moment to be lost. She quickly called Jacob and asked him to bring her two young goats which she would cook in such a way as to make them taste like venison. Jacob was then to take the meat to his father and pretend to be Esau, so that he might get the blessing for himself before his brother came back.

For once in his life Jacob was not ready to obey his mother. He knew that what his mother wished him to do was wrong.

"Behold," he said, "my brother is rough

and hairy, but my skin is smooth. Perhaps my father will feel me. Then I shall seem to him as a deceiver, and I shall bring a curse upon myself and not a blessing."

But his mother hurried him and said—

"I shall bear the blame. Go and do as I tell thee."

He obeyed and brought the goats. Rebekah then prepared the meat. She made Jacob put on some of Esau's clothes, which smelt of the scent of the wild flowers of the woods and the fields. She covered his hands and neck with the skins of the goats, so that if his father felt him, he would seem to be hairy like Esau.

When all was ready, Jacob took the meat into his father's tent and called—

"My father!"

"Here am I!" answered Isaac. "Who art thou?"

"I am Esau thy firstborn," was the answer. "I have done as thou hast asked me. I beg of thee to eat of this venison so that thy soul may bless me."

"How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son?" asked Isaac.

There could be no turning back now. Jacob said—

"Because the Lord helped me."

Though Jacob may have tried to speak like Esau, Isaac seemed to doubt whether it was really Esau speaking. So he said—

"Come near, my son, that I may feel thee, and make sure that thou art really my son Esau."

He felt Jacob's hands and said—

"The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau."

Yet Isaac was satisfied. He ate the meat

and then called his son and kissed him. Then the pious old father spoke in a way which showed that the spirit of God was in him and that he could see into the future. He said—

"See, the smell of my son
Is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed.
So God give thee of the dew of heaven
And of the fat places of the earth,
And plenty of corn and wine.
Let peoples serve thee,
And nations bow down to thee.
Be Lord over thy brethren,
And let thy mother's son bow down to thee.
Cursed be everyone that curseth thee,
And blessed be everyone that blesseth thee."

These words told of the future greatness that was to come to the Children of Israel.

As soon as Jacob had left, Esau returned with the venison. He cooked it and took it to his father, saying—

"Let my father arise and eat his son's venison so that thy soul may bless me."

"Who art thou?" asked his father in surprise.

Esau answered at once, "I am thy son, thy firstborn, Esau."

There could be no doubt about the voice this time. Isaac trembled very much, for he saw that he had been deceived. But there could be no taking back of the prayer that had gone up to God. He told Esau how Jacob had come and taken the blessing, and in the end he said, "Yea, and he shall be blessed."

Esau cried bitterly to his father, and Isaac blessed him also. But as Jacob was to be lord over his brethren, the blessing given to Esau could not be so good as that given to his brother. Isaac foretold that Esau's family, too, would grow into a nation with a good land, but it would be a warlike race, and would, for a time, be ruled by the nation that grew from the family of Jacob.

JACOB

THE HARD AND LONELY ROAD

Our religion teaches us that if we sin, God punishes us for it. We sometimes go through years of pain and sorrow because of one wrong deed. But just as iron is made pure by passing through a furnace, so are our hearts made better and purer by pain and sorrow. In this way, if we are humble before God, our lives are made holier, and we are brought nearer to Him.

Jacob had wronged his brother, and sinned against his father. Rebekah, too, had done wrong, and had also led Jacob to sin, though it was only out of her love for him. We shall now see how great was the punishment of both of them.

Esau hated Jacob for what he had done, and made up his mind to kill him when their father died. Rebekah heard of this. Oh, how grieved she must have been at the thought of one of her sons killing the other! She went to Jacob and told him of his danger. Though it was hard to be parted from him, she told him to leave his home and go to her brother Laban who lived far off, and stay there till Esau's anger passed away.

Isaac also agreed to this, for he did not want Jacob to marry one of the women of the land as Esau had done. So Isaac blessed Jacob again and sent him on his journey.

With aching heart Rebekah bade him farewell. She was never to see him again, for she died before he returned. It is sad to think of the poor broken-hearted mother yearning to see her beloved son before she died; but it was her own wrong-doing that caused all her grief and pain.

Jacob himself went through many hard and lonely and bitter years of suffering for the wrong he had done.

With a sad heart he started on the long journey. He left behind him all he loved,

his dear father and mother, and the comforts of his home. He set out in secret and alone. He had to face the danger of meeting wandering tribesmen who might rob him or even kill him. Wild beasts, too, prowled about in the desert wastes through which he had to pass.

Yet he never lost his faith in God, which is the only real help in our darkest and saddest hours. At the time when he was quite lonely and friendless, there came a message from God. It brought to him the hope and comfort which he sorely needed.

One night, weary after his day's journey, he threw himself on the ground to rest. He put a stone under his head for a pillow. Slowly the grey stones of the desert seemed to fade away, and the scene was lit up in a blaze of glorious light.

From the earth to the golden heavens there reached a ladder. On it were angels going up and down, as if they were bringing a message to mankind and taking the prayers of men back to the heavenly Father. Jacob was dreaming. In his dream he saw a vision of God, Who once again gave the promise

which had been given to Abraham and Isaac, about the future greatness of their family. God promised, too, that He would watch over Jacob and bring him safely back to his home.

When Jacob awoke, everything seemed much brighter to him. He felt happier. He called the name of the place Bethel, which means "The House of God."

However lonely and dark a place may be, God is always there. Wherever we think of Him, we make the place holy. By Jacob's faith, and thoughts of God, the dreary desert waste was sanctified. However humble our home may be, if we do our duty there, it becomes a "House of God."

JACOB AND LABAN

At length Jacob came to the place where his uncle Laban lived, and while resting by a well he met a shepherdess who had come to give water to her sheep. He had already heard from some shepherds that she was Rachel, the daughter of Laban.

He helped her by rolling a great stone from the mouth of the well, and then made himself known to her. He was received into her father's home with signs of joy and friendship. After staying there for a month he agreed to help to look after Laban's sheep.

Now Jacob had fallen deeply in love with Rachel. When he was asked what wages he wanted, he said he would work for seven years for nothing if he could then have Rachel as his wife. Laban agreed. The seven years seemed to Jacob like a few days, because of his love for Rachel. But Laban was a dishonest man, and he deceived Jacob. When the time came for the marriage, the bride was brought in closely veiled, as was the custom. When the wedding was over, Jacob found that he had not been married to Rachel, but to her elder sister Leah, whom Laban had brought as the bride.

Jacob was vexed at the way in which he had been treated, but Laban pretended that it was against the law of his country to allow a younger daughter to marry before her elder sister.

Jacob had been deceived in much the same way as he had deceived his own father.

Laban promised, however, that if Jacob would work for him for seven years more, he should marry Rachel as well. In those times a man could have more than one wife, as he can in some lands even at the present time.

Jacob worked faithfully for another seven years for Rachel. Then he served Laban for still another six years, and received cattle as his wages. During the time he was with Laban, twelve sons and a daughter were born to him.

Laban had never treated Jacob fairly, and they did not get on well together. So one night Jacob took all his family and his cattle and started for his father's home in Canaan. Laban went after him, and when they met, angry words passed between them. Jacob spoke of the way he had been treated and of his sufferings.

"I have served you faithfully," he said, "for all these years. If any of your cattle were injured or stolen I had to bear the loss. I have worked in the scorching heat of day, and in the biting frost at night, care robbing me of rest and sleep. I could never be sure of my wages. You have changed them many times." In the end their angry feelings calmed down, and they parted as friends.

But the trials and hardships which Jacob suffered because of his own wrong act were not yet over. On his journey back, he heard

that his brother Esau, who was now a great chief, was coming to meet him with four hundred men. He passed through awful agony in fear of his brother's revenge, which might fall, not only on himself, but on all his family. But the careless, kind-hearted Esau had forgiven him, and met him with gentle words. They kissed one another in their joy of meeting again. The bitterness of their early years had passed away, giving place to brotherly love.

JOSEPH

PART I.—HOW HE BECAME A SLAVE IN EGYPT

After a time Jacob made his home in Canaan, among the broad grass-lands at the foot of the hills in the valley of Hebron.

In the home fields were a number of tents where he and his sons and his servants lived. Round about could be seen his sheep and oxen; and his flocks could also be found in far-off fields.

Playing near the tent of Jacob, there could often be seen his son Joseph, a bright, happy little boy; and no matter how much Jacob had to do, he always found a little time to sit and talk with Joseph. For Joseph was the best-beloved of all his twelve sons, the joy of his father's heart and the light of his eyes. One reason for this was that the child's mother, Rachel, whom Jacob had loved more than anyone else in the world, had died, leaving him Joseph and a new-born baby boy, Benjamin. All the love of the

father's heart turned to these two sons, but most of all to Joseph.

Jacob gave to his beloved son a rich cloak, such as was worn by the eldest son of a prince. As Joseph ran and played in the fields, and round the tents, his coat shone brightly in the sunlight. It was not wise of Jacob to show this greater love for Joseph. It made the other brothers jealous, and they spoke angry and spiteful words against him.

They became more angry still when Joseph told them of his strange dreams. Once he dreamed that he and his brothers were binding sheaves of corn in a field and that their sheaves bowed down to his sheaf. At another time he dreamed that the sun and the moon and eleven stars all bowed down to him. These dreams could only mean that he was going to rule over his brothers.

After this they could not be civil to him. The only time when there was peace was when they went far away with their flocks to find fresh pastures.

Once, when they had been away for a long time, Jacob called Joseph and asked him to

go and see if they were safe and well. Joseph was eager to do what his father bade him and he set out with a light heart. It was not easy to find them, but after some days he saw their tents. He hurried forward to greet them.

The sharp eyes of the shepherd brothers saw him in the distance. The colour of his coat told them who he was, but it also awakened the hate in their hearts.

"Behold! this dreamer comes," they said to one another. "Let us kill him and throw him into a pit. We will say, 'Some evil beast has eaten him up,' and we shall see what will become of his dreams."

With dark and angry faces they watched him coming. None felt any pity for the poor boy, except Reuben, the eldest brother. He felt, too, that it was his duty to answer for the safety of Joseph. So he said, "Let us not kill him; let us put him in the pit and leave him there to die." He meant to come back and save him after the others had gone away.

As Joseph ran to give his father's message, rough hands caught hold of him, tore off his coat and hurried him away. How pitifully he

looked up into the hard faces of his brothers when he saw that they meant to kill him! Once in the pit he would never be able to climb up the steep sides, even if he were not drowned in the water that might be at the bottom. He cried out for mercy but they would not listen. They lowered him down, down, into the darkness. Oh, how he must have suffered!

Would he never again see his dear father and his little brother? Would he never again spend happy days in the green fields under the bright blue sky? Down, down he went until he reached the bottom, but, happily, the pit was dry.

The brothers sat down to eat and Reuben left them. Just then some merchants passed by on their way to Egypt, their camels laden with goods. Instead of leaving Joseph in the pit to die, his brothers made up their minds to sell him to the merchants as a slave. In this way they could make sure of getting rid of him altogether. A man once sold as a slave never came back. Slavery was worse than death. Besides this, they would make profit out of their evil plan. Soon Joseph

JOSEPH SOLD AS A SLAVE

heard their voices again. When they lifted him into the light of day, he thought they were sorry for what they had done, but he soon found that he had been drawn out of the pit only to be sold, and carried as a slave to the land of Egypt.

Later on, Reuben came back to the pit. When he found Joseph was not there he was greatly grieved. He did not then hide from his brothers what he had made up his mind to do.

"The child is not there," he cried in sorrow, "and I, where shall I go?" He was thinking of their aged father.

Cruelly they told him that Joseph was now far away on the road to Egypt, and they added that Reuben must keep their secret. What was to be done? Joseph's coat lay there before them as they had torn it off. They dipped it in the blood of a goat which they killed, and carried it back to their father.

When they reached home, the little coat, all blood-stained and torn, was laid out before the eyes of Jacob.

"This have we found," they said. "See whether it is thy son's coat or not."

How could he forget the princely coat? How often had his heart been filled with love and pride as he had looked upon his beloved son wearing this very coat!

He could only weep and moan and cry out, "I shall never stop mourning for Joseph till I go down to my own grave."

But the end of the story is much happier. God was watching over Joseph, and meant him to play a great part in carrying out His purpose.

PART II.—FROM PRISONER TO PRINCE

When the merchants reached Egypt they sold Joseph to Potiphar, the captain of the soldiers who looked after the safety of the King, whose name was Pharaoh. Joseph must have been very unhappy to be a slave and to be away from his father and his home, but he did not give way to sorrow and sadness. He set himself to do his work as best he could.

Potiphar found he could trust this good-looking boy who worked so very hard to

please him. In time he made Joseph the chief servant over his household. But another trouble soon came. His master's wife was a very wicked woman. She falsely said that Joseph had done wrong, and he was put in chains and cast into prison.

Even here he won the friendship of everyone; and he behaved so well that the keeper of the prison took off his chains and put him to look after the other prisoners.

Among them were two servants of the King. One was the King's baker and the other was the King's butler, whose duty it was to take care of the wine and serve it to his master.

One morning, both these men looked sad, because they had been troubled by dreams. They told their dreams to Joseph. Now God had given wisdom to Joseph, and he was able to say what the dreams meant. The baker had dreamt that he carried on his head three baskets of bread and cake and other food. In the topmost basket, there was special food for the King, but the birds flew down and ate it. This dream was a sad one. Joseph told the baker that it meant

that he would be hanged in three days, and that the birds would eat his flesh.

The butler's dream was a happy one. He had seen a vine on which there were three bunches of grapes, and he had pressed the juice into the King's cup and handed it to him. This meant that in three days he would be set free to serve the King again as in the days gone by.

"But think of me when it shall be well with thee," said Joseph longingly, "and be so kind as to speak to Pharaoh about me and help me to get out of this prison. For I have not done anything wrong."

All that Joseph had spoken came true; but the butler quite forgot him. Poor Joseph waited and waited in vain. One day passed and then another; summer came and then the winter, but he still remained shut up in the dark prison.

But after a time something happened which made the butler think of Joseph.

Once again it was a dream, but this time the dreamer was the great King himself. He sent for all the clever men of the land, but none could tell him the meaning of his

dream. Then the butler told Pharaoh what had happened in prison. So the King asked for Joseph to be brought to him. Joseph's hair, which had grown long, was cut. He was given a change of clothes and taken before the King.

Pharaoh told his dream to Joseph, and it was this: He was standing by a river and seven fat and fine-looking cows came out of the water and began to eat the grass that grew near. Then seven thin and ugly cows came out of the river and ate up the seven

fat cows, and yet they remained as thin as they were before. Then again the King saw seven fine ears of corn on one stalk, and as he looked, he saw on another stalk, seven thin and shrivelled ears of corn, which swallowed up the full ears. Then the King awoke.

Joseph understood at once that the dreams came as a warning from God. He said he could do nothing by himself, but with God's help he would tell the King all he could. He then said that there would be seven years of good harvests, when there would be plenty of corn. Then there would come seven years when very little corn would grow, or seven years of famine as we call it. Therefore, he said, corn should be saved during the good years to provide for the bad years. He advised Pharaoh to choose a wise man to carry out this plan.

Pharaoh saw at once that the best man for this task was Joseph himself. He said—

"Since God has shown you all this, there can be no man as good and as wise as you. You shall rule over the country, and, next to myself, you shall be the greatest man in all the land."

What a change in the fortunes of Joseph! One day he was a poor, lonely, unknown prisoner, in torn and ragged clothes. The next day, he was the greatest man in Egypt, except the King. Now he was to live in a palace and wear the clothes of a prince. He was to ride in a fine chariot with tall soldiers on prancing horses at each side. At his word messengers carried his orders to all parts of the land. At the lifting of his hand, slaves rushed forth to do his bidding.

Joseph deserved his greatness. He was the best man to rule Egypt in the times that were to come. In the old days, in his home, he had been taught to fear God and do his duty. Though his life was changed, in his heart he was the same, ever brave and fearless in serving God and the King, and as wise in ruling as he had been faithful in serving.

PART III.—TO FORGIVE IS BETTER THAN TO HATE

In the good years Joseph laid up stores of corn. When the famine came there was plenty, not only for the people of Egypt, but for strangers who came from other countries; for the famine had spread far and wide.

One day there stood before him ten weary, dust-covered men. They had come from the land of Canaan to buy corn for their families. Can you guess who they were? They were his brothers whom he had begged for mercy when he was a helpless boy. Now when they came before the great ruler they little thought he was their brother; but he knew them at once. He longed to tell them, then and there, who he was, and that he had forgiven them. But he thought it was right that they should be taught a lesson.

Joseph pretended that they were spies and spoke roughly to them. But they said, "We are not spies. We are the sons of one man in the land of Canaan. One other brother is dead, and our youngest brother" (meaning Benjamin) "is at home with his father."

Joseph wanted to be sure that Benjamin was still alive; so he said that they must prove that they spoke the truth, by bringing their youngest brother to him. They were made to leave one brother with him, before they returned. When they came home Jacob, remembering the fate of Joseph, would not let Benjamin go. At last all the corn was eaten up, and one of the brothers, named Judah, begged his father to let Benjamin go back with them to Egypt. He faithfully promised to bring him home safely, saying that he would be surety for him. In the end Jacob allowed Benjamin to go.

When they returned, Joseph's first question was, "Is your father well?" They answered, "He is well." The good news, and the sight of his brother Benjamin, stirred up all the old love in his heart. He had to turn his head so that his brothers should not see his tears.

He asked them to have a meal with him, and then sent them away loaded with sacks of corn, but he first told his servants to hide his silver drinking-cup in Benjamin's sack. He gave orders that when they had gone

some distance, they should be overtaken and charged with stealing the cup. This was done.

They knew they were not guilty and said, "If any one of us has the cup, let him die, and we shall all be slaves to your master."

When the cup was found in Benjamin's sack they were terribly grieved. They said to each other that God was punishing them for their cruelty to Joseph long ago.

They were brought back to Joseph, and he said that as a punishment for stealing the cup, Benjamin should be his slave. Then Judah, faithful to his promise, stepped forward and told of the grief that this would bring to their aged father, and begged to be taken as a slave in the place of his brother.

Joseph now saw that they were truly sorry for the wrong they had done years ago, and that they were ready to suffer in order to save their father from further grief. He could no longer hide his feelings, and he made himself known to his trembling brothers. He loaded them with gifts, and gave them many camels and wagons to bring their father and all their

"THERE STOOD JOSEPH READY TO WELCOME HIM"

families to share his good fortune in the land of Egypt.

Jacob's sorrow was turned to joy when he heard the wonderful news. Though he was now very old, his joy gave him strength for the long journey. There, at the end of it, stood Joseph in his grand palace ready to welcome him; Joseph the great ruler in his rich and princely robes; Joseph, whose word was law, and at the lifting of whose hand slaves rushed forth to do his bidding.

But in his father's eyes, dim with age and wet with tears, he was the same best-beloved boy, the joy of his father's heart and the light of his life, who, with happy face and merry laugh, had played around the tents in the broad grass-lands at the foot of the hills in the valley of Hebron.

BEAUTIFUL HANDS

Beautiful hands are those that do
Work that is earnest, brave and true,
Moment by moment the long day through.

Beautiful feet are those that go
On kindly ministries to and fro,
Down lowliest ways, if God wills so.

Beautiful shoulders are those that bear
Ceaseless burdens of homely care
With patience, grace and daily prayer.

Beautiful lives are those that bless,
Silent rivers of happiness,
Whose hidden fountains none can guess.

Ellen P. Allerton.

IN THE LAND OF EGYPT

When Pharaoh heard that Jacob and his sons and their families had come to Egypt, he gave them a warm welcome for the sake of Joseph, and he asked them to live there. So they settled down to a peaceful life in brotherly love, forgetting the quarrels of the past.

In the course of time Jacob and his sons died, and as the years rolled on, the number of Israelites grew into hundreds and then into thousands and then into tens of thousands. They did not live among the Egyptians, but made their home in the land of Goshen, which is a part of the country nearest to Canaan. This place was chosen because they were all shepherds, and this part of the land was best for sheep.

Before you hear the story of the Israelites in Egypt, we shall tell you something of the land and of the people who lived there at that time.

Egypt is a country about seven hundred

miles long. Except in a very few parts, it does not seem to be a good land for corn, for it is mostly desert. For miles and miles, as far as eye can reach, there is sand and sand, soft, brown and dry, where nothing can grow.

But, flowing through the length of the country is a great river, the Nile, which rises hundreds and hundreds of miles away among great mountains. There the rains come down in very heavy torrents, filling vast lakes, from the waters of which the Nile is fed. In the winter the mountains are covered deeply with snow which melts in the spring. The waters pour into the lakes and then into the Nile, and the river rises higher and higher until it floods a large part of the country.

The rushing waters bring with them rich earth from the uplands. After the floods go down, the land is covered with a layer of soil, in which crops can be grown. For this reason Egypt was the greatest corn country in the olden times.

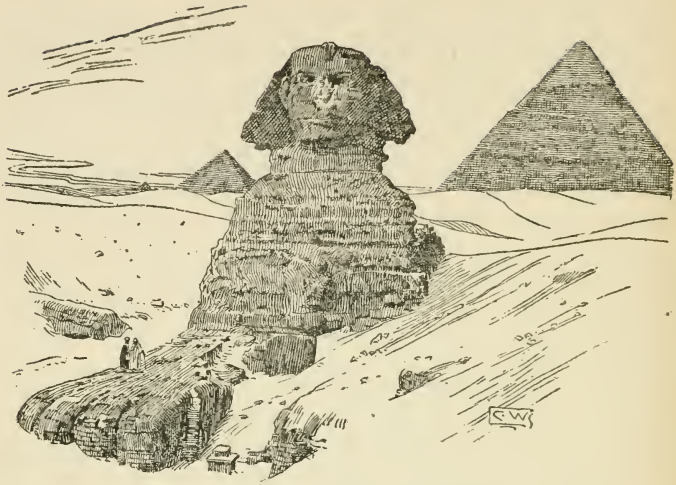
We read in the Bible that when there was a famine in Canaan, Abraham and Isaac

went down to Egypt to buy corn. It sometimes happened that the river did not overflow at the right time, and then there was a famine in Egypt, as in the time of Joseph.

Egypt is often troubled by sand-storms. The sand is blown into the air and is carried along by the wind. People caught in the storm must lie down and cover their faces. Such storms do much harm to the crops and make the ears of corn thin and useless like those Pharaoh saw in his dreams.

In the evening the desert is lovely. Beautiful sunsets can be seen, when the deep blue of the sky slowly changes into the colour of gold; and at night, in the clear, dry air, the stars shine ever so brightly.

In olden times the people of Egypt formed the greatest and strongest nation in the world. There were princes who trained soldiers for the King as the Barons did in England in the time of the Normans, hundreds of years later. The King had mighty armies at his command, and they conquered many lands. Besides being strong, the people were rich and clever—cleverer in some ways than the people of to-day.



THE GREAT SPHINX AND PYRAMIDS

On the banks of the Nile they built cities, temples and palaces. They also built the pyramids, which are very tall buildings, broad at the bottom, narrower as they go higher, and ending in a point at the top. Such large stones were used in building these pyramids, that even now, we cannot tell how they were lifted into their places.

The pyramids were the tombs of kings. Near one of them was set up a giant figure known as the Sphinx, which has the shape of a lion with a woman's head. It is believed

this was a god set up there to guard the tomb of one of the kings. The pyramids and the Sphinx can be seen to-day.

Strange writings are carved on the stones. The letters are in the shape of men and women, birds, beasts and fishes. There are clever men who can read these writings which tell something of the history of ancient Egypt.

The rulers were very cruel. To build their cities and their palaces they employed thousands and thousands of slaves, who were crowded together in misery and dirt.

This caused many awful illnesses, which struck down the rich and the poor alike. Thick swarms of stinging flies and other insects troubled the people. The water sometimes became so bad that it was unfit to drink.

There were clever scholars in Egypt. There were men who were wise doctors, and others who knew about the stars and their movements. There were still others who could use strange magic. Yet the people were foolish in many ways. They did not know of the true God, and prayed to idols

—big queer figures of men and animals, sometimes figures which were half man and half beast. In their temples they set up these idols which, of course, could not teach the people what was right or wrong; and much evil was done in the land.

Such was this land of old; the land of the great river; the land of golden sunsets and bright starlight; the land of mighty armies and conquerors; the land of temples and palaces, the pyramids and the Sphinx; the land where the princes and rulers lived in grandeur and the slaves in misery; the land of idols and strange beliefs; the land of mystery and dark deeds.

There in the silence of the desert, amid the everlasting sands, and under the heavens ablaze with light, the Israelites grew stronger and stronger in their faith in the Maker of all things, and were ready to receive their first message from God.

And now you shall hear the story.

MOSES

PART I.—THE CRUEL KING AND THE KIND PRINCESS

For many years the children of Israel dwelt in the land of Goshen in freedom and happiness. They lived the quiet lives of shepherds and kept to their simple faith in God. But alas! their happiness did not last.

A great war had taken place in Egypt, and at the end of it, a new ruler sat upon the throne. Like other Egyptian kings, he

was known as Pharaoh, for the name means "the ruler of the two Egypts," the upper and lower Egypt, as we speak of them to-day.

The new Pharaoh lived in a grand palace near the land of Goshen. Looking round him in his pride, his eyes fell on the Hebrews.

"These people are not really Egyptians," he said, "and in the next war they may join our enemies. They are growing too strong. We must keep them under."

As he wished to make his power still greater, he said—

"They shall no longer be free. They shall be our slaves."

So they were torn from their homes and forced to build cities and temples, and palaces and storehouses and pyramids. They were also set to build forts and to raise up walls to keep the rising waters of the Nile from the cities and from the palace gardens.

How hard and cruel and bitter it all was to these simple shepherds! They wanted to be left alone to lead their sheep to the sweet-smelling pastures beside the quiet waters, and, in the heat of the day, to sit in the shade

of the palm trees. Now they had to slave from morn till night on the burning sands, amid dust and lime and clay and mortar and brick.

They were cruelly beaten with whips. If some of them died at their work, who among their stern masters cared? There were plenty of slaves! But the Egyptians were one day to learn that there is a just God in heaven, and that they could not crush the spirit of a people by slavery.

But still the Israelites grew in numbers. At last Pharaoh cruelly ordered that every little boy that was born among them should be thrown into the river, while the little girls were to be spared. He thought that as time went on, there would not be any Israelites to lift up swords against his people; and as for the girls, they might become the wives of the Egyptians.

But the mightiest kings cannot conquer the power of a mother's love. Many mothers thought of ways of saving their dear little boys. There were plenty of children among the Israelites, many years later, when the time came for them to leave the land.

Such a mother in Israel was Jochebed. In a rough little hut on the banks of the Nile she sat hugging a tiny baby boy in her arms, while the tears ran down her cheeks.

Such a lovely boy he was, too, so strong and so fair. Should he be thrown to the hungry crocodiles? "No," she sobbed, "not while God gives me strength to save him." Helped by her daughter Miriam she hid him from the eyes of the Egyptians for three months. Then she thought of a plan to save him, and prayed to God to help her to carry it out.

On the banks of the Nile grow plants with strong stems, called bulrushes. Some of these she cut down and dried, and she wove them into a cradle with a cover. She smeared it over with pitch so that the water could not come through, and in it she made a soft, warm bed. She put her baby inside, and placed the cradle amongst the reeds at the edge of the river, near a garden belonging to the palace of the King. She must have known that Pharaoh's daughter came down to the quiet pool at this spot to bathe. Her motherly heart told her that she

"SHE PLACED THE CRADLE AMONGST THE REEDS AT THE EDGE OF THE RIVER"

might trust her dear one to the kindness and pity of another woman.

She dared not stay too near, but she did not go very far away. Nearer still to her baby brother stood his sister Miriam, to watch what would happen, and ready to do anything she could to help, though she could hardly guess what this would be.

They had not long to wait. Very soon some figures were seen coming through the courtyard of the palace, and down the broad steps into the gardens. Along the paths they came. Now they passed stone carvings of men and animals; then they walked at the side of ponds joined by streams of water flowing and falling over rocks. Then they disappeared behind waving palms and overhanging trees only to come into sight again on the steps leading down to the water's edge. Who could they be?

The soldiers on guard raised their swords or spears and bent low. The gardeners stopped working. They slowly stretched their arms out sideways and bowed themselves to the ground. For, indeed, it was the Princess herself who was passing with

her maids. Two of them held up a big shade to keep the sun's hot rays from her head. Others carried large fans made of feathers to fan their mistress.

At the edge of the pool she stopped and gazed at the strange-looking basket. She asked her maidens to bring it to her. The cover was lifted, and inside, lying snugly wrapped up, was the dearest baby she had ever seen, all rosy and fresh after his sleep. He gazed up at her, with wide-open eyes. At the sight of strange faces he began to cry, and the cry went straight to the heart of the Princess. She guessed that it was one of the Hebrew children, and made up her mind that the beautiful child should be saved.

The sweet smile on the face of the Princess gave Miriam courage, and she ran forward with beating heart.

"Shall I find a Hebrew woman to nurse the baby?" she asked.

"Yes, do!" was the answer.

Perhaps the Princess guessed that the mother would not be far off. She must have smiled when Miriam came back so

quickly with a nurse, who, of course, was none other than Jochebed.

"Take this child and nurse it for me," she said to the happy mother, "and I will pay you your wages."

The Princess had no child of her own, and she meant to take care of this little boy as her son. She playfully called his name "Moses," which means, "drawn out of the water." As soon as he was old enough, he was to come to live in the palace. Thus the child was saved from the cruelty of the King by the tenderness of his own daughter.

And now Moses was back again, safe in the loving arms of his own mother. With her he passed the first years of his life. As he grew she told him about his own people and about their sufferings. She spoke to him of the wonders of the world, the work of the Almighty, the only true God, and of the promise to our forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The things he learnt took root in his heart, and were never forgotten.

At last, when he was old enough, the child born of slaves was taken through the terraced gardens and up the broad steps, to his new

home among the marbled halls of the palace that looked down on the waters of the great river.

PART II.—FROM THE PALACE TO THE WILDERNESS

THE Bible does not tell us much about the life of Moses as a boy in the palace, but we can imagine a good deal of it.

At first the beautiful halls must have seemed to him like fairyland. The figures of the idols must have puzzled him, and, perhaps, frightened him, until he became used to them. How he must have enjoyed running about the gardens and around the ponds with their waterfalls; and among the waving palms, the giant lotus flowers, and the overhanging trees! There, too, he could watch the galleys as they glided along the river, carrying the great people of the land.

Moses must have seen the princes and rulers come together in the chief hall to meet messengers from other kings. Pharaoh, wearing his glittering crown, would sit on his throne at the top of steps of pure

white marble inlaid with gold. Around him would be princes dressed in rich silks and covered with jewels; and tall soldiers in bright armour, holding up flashing swords or polished spears.

Moses was present when feasts were held. The honoured guests sat down to food as rich and rare as ever the heart of man could desire, and the wealth of kings could buy. They were served with golden goblets of wine pressed from the finest grapes. As the feasting went on, there would be laughter and shout, and music and dance.

None of the nobles present ever gave a thought to the poor slaves driven without pity and without rest, to toil in the burning sands. But Moses remembered. He seemed to see his mother's sad, sweet face through all the glitter of these scenes.

It is very likely that Moses was sent to one of the temples where the boys of noble birth were taught by priests. There he learnt to read and write. He was taught the history of the country, and about the stars, and about beasts, and about birds and about plants. We are told that he was "learned in all

AN EGYPTIAN WAR CHARIOT
(From a wall painting)

the wisdom of the Egyptians." The priests must have tried to make him serve their strange idols, and pray to crocodiles, sacred cats, the sun, the moon, and the river Nile, which they were foolish enough to believe were gods. But he must have smiled to himself, for he knew better.

He must often have seen armies drilling and making ready for war. There were foot-soldiers, charging with levelled spears. There were mighty horse-soldiers. There were also war-chariots. On them stood soldiers with bows and arrows. And what

swift fiery horses were they in the traces! They tossed their proud heads, stamped their hoofs and swayed to the right and to the left, as if eager to dash forward on to the enemy.

All this time the heart of Moses was with his own people. The greatness of Egypt seemed a mockery, if the rulers could be so cruel. In him was the spirit of the knights of a later time who went forth to help the weak against the unjust strong. In him the love of right stood before all things. Perhaps when he became a man, he tried to do the best he could at the King's court for his people, but in vain.

Many a time he went out among his brethren, and he must have been well known to them. Once he saw an Egyptian treat an Israelite very cruelly. He became so angry that he killed the Egyptian. Nobody else was near at the time, and Moses buried the body in the sand.

But the man who had been saved from cruelty must have spoken about the matter, for soon afterwards Moses tried to make peace between two Israelites who were quarrelling, and the wrongdoer said—

"Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you wish to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?"

It was plain that the deed of Moses was known far and wide, and that it had come to the ears of Pharaoh himself. The King would never forgive the killing of an Egyptian for the sake of a Hebrew slave. In the courts of the King there would go up a cry for revenge.

So Moses fled from the country. He made his way to the rugged mountains of Horeb, on the borders of the wilderness, in the land of Midian, where there lived simple shepherds like the Israelites themselves.

Here one day he rested by a well and helped to give water to the flocks of some shepherdesses who were being rudely treated by the shepherds. The maidens were the daughters of Jethro, the priest of that place, who, when he heard what had happened, invited Moses into his home. As they talked, Jethro noticed his princely manners, his wide knowledge, and his love of kindness, justice and truth. He asked Moses to live with him, and Moses agreed to do so. Before long one of the priest's daughters, Zipporah,

"MOSES BECAME A SHEPHERD"

fell in love with Moses, and they were married.

Perhaps Moses felt that he ought to have been sharing in the hardships of his own people on the banks of the Nile. We see what was in his heart when a son was born to him. He called him "Gershon," which means "stranger," for he said, "I have been a stranger in a strange land." But it was God's purpose that things should happen as they did.

In this new land Moses became a shepherd, like his forefathers of old, and he looked after the sheep of Jethro.

Was Moses sorry to give up the life in the palace of Egypt? No, he hated it all! He would rather do right and live humbly than live in grandeur and remain silent while great wrongs were done. He had stood up against evil, and he was now content to look after sheep, to wander about lonely valleys, to climb over rocks and to push his way through the rough paths among the wild tangled bushes that grew on the mountains of Horeb at the edge of the wilderness.

PART III.—THE MESSAGE

Among the mountains of Horeb, far away from the busy scenes of life, the thoughts of Moses ever turned with pity and longing to his brethren. He often questioned the merchants whose caravans passed through the land of Midian on their way from Egypt. He heard that the old king was dead and that a new king reigned in his place. To his sorrow, he learnt also that the lives of the Israelites had become harder than ever.

One day, when he had wandered to a wild and lonely spot, he saw a deep red glow in one of the bushes, and then flames shot out into the air. As he watched, he noticed that, strangely enough, the bush did not burn out. Nobody else was to be seen; and when he heard a voice out of the midst of the fire, calling him by name, he knew that he was in the presence of the living God.

Now came the wondrous message for the suffering people. It was a message of love and help, of hope and joy, of life and freedom. With that red glow there was kindled the light of faith which has burned all through the

ages to this day. It showed that a new age was at hand in the history of the world, in which the Israelites were to play a great part, and, by their teachings, become a blessing to the people of the whole earth.

God told Moses that He had chosen him to bring the Children of Israel out of Egypt to the promised land, from the darkness of slavery to the light of freedom; and that Moses was to take a message to Pharaoh asking him to let the people go.

The time that Moses had longed for, had come; yet he feared that he might be unable to carry out the great task.

"Who am I," he asked humbly, "that I should bring forth the Children of Israel out of Egypt?" He also said that he was not a good speaker, and he feared that even his own people would not believe him.

But God bade him do his best and trust in His help, and, further, to take with him his brother Aaron, whom he would meet on the way. Aaron was a good speaker, and would be able to speak for Moses.

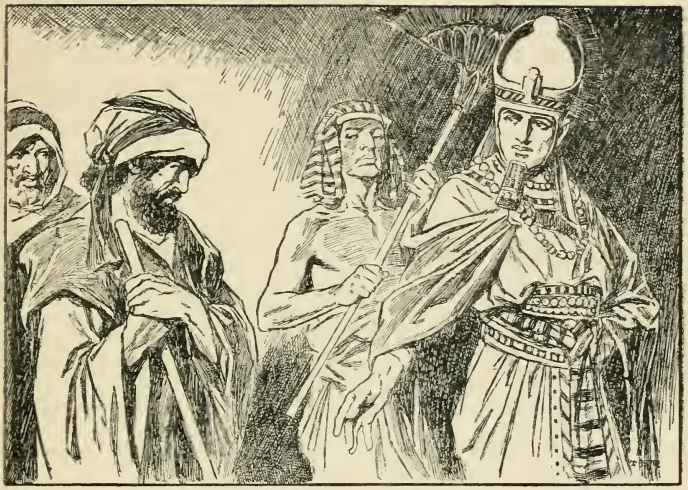
God gave Moses some wonderful signs to show to Pharaoh and also to the Israelites.

The rod that Moses carried turned into a serpent when it was cast on the ground. When Moses grasped it again, it turned back into a rod.

Then Moses was told to put his hand into his bosom, and when he drew it out, it was withered by an awful disease known as leprosy. By putting it into his bosom a second time, it was healed. He had a third sign, which was to take water from the river and pour it on the land; it would then be turned into blood.

Moses now set out for the scenes of his early life. He met his brother Aaron, and together they went to the elders, or chief men, of the Israelites, and told them the words that the Lord had spoken. Ah! this was the message for which all their hearts had longed. They bowed their heads in thankful prayer.

Moses was almost a stranger in Egypt, for most of those who had known him had passed away. He and Aaron at length came before the King and gave him the message. In the name of God they asked that the Hebrew slaves should be allowed to go



three days' journey into the wilderness to worship God in their own way. Pharaoh glanced at his guards with their drawn swords. Then he thought of the crowds of unarmed slaves working under the whips of the taskmasters.

"Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice?" he asked, with a mocking smile. "I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go."

Even the wonderful signs did not move him. He called his wise men, who, either by some kind of magic which we do not

understand, or by some trickery, appeared to be able to show the same signs. It seemed as if more harm than good had been done. The people were made to work harder than ever, and they blamed Moses and Aaron.

At God's command Moses went again and again to Pharaoh, but he no longer begged the King to let the people go—he demanded it. He warned the King that, if he did not obey, God would cause great plagues to come upon the Egyptians. Pharaoh would not yield. One by one the plagues came, each worse than the one before. First, the waters of the Nile turned into blood—a terrible warning, indeed, if the Egyptians had tried to understand its meaning. Then slimy frogs in great numbers came into their houses. Stinging gnats and flies swarmed over the land. Then came diseases which caused the people to be covered with boils, and which spread to the animals. Immense hailstones fell and destroyed the crops and killed the cattle.

Then there came three days of black darkness in the land. Many times the pride of the King broke down under these awful

plagues. He begged Moses to pray to God to take them away and promised to let the Israelites go. But his heart hardened again each time, and he broke his promise.

Now came the most terrible plague of all. One midnight the Angel of Death passed over the land, and the eldest son in every Egyptian family lay dead. Pharaoh and all the princes and all the people rose up in the night.

"My eldest son is dead!" cried one. "And mine!" "And mine!" cried many others, wringing their hands. A cry of agony went up in the land. Fear and horror filled all hearts. Now the King was ready to bow to the will of God.

He sent for Moses and Aaron and begged them to lead the people to worship their God as they wished. He asked them to take the cattle that they still had, and everything that belonged to them, and depart.

Not less eager were the rest of the people for the Israelites to go. The Egyptians loaded them with presents of clothes and jewels of silver and gold. The Israelites had been told to get ready for this great moment. At last it had come!

Can you imagine the scene on that night? There was no sleep for anybody in the land. Heralds mounted on swift horses rushed forth from the palace courtyards, and galloped here and there to help Moses to collect his people. The Israelites wasted not a moment. They made up into bundles whatever they could carry on their shoulders. They packed up their basins without stopping to knead the dough which was to be made into bread. They did not wish to give the King time to change his mind and break his word again. Think of the task of Moses and Aaron and the elders! They had to gather together thousands of excited men, women and children, to get them in order and to march them along the road that led to the wilderness. Tenderly were the little ones wrapped up and carried. The strong helped the weak. As far as was possible the women and the children were placed on such wagons as the men had been able to collect.

They went forward with joy, and with faith in God's help. They went forth with their souls lifted up by the thoughts of freedom. With heads high, they marched

"THE STRONG HELPED THE WEAK"

past the two cities of Pithom and Raamses, built by themselves as slaves; past the great forts of these cities, which were filled with soldiers placed there to prevent the Israelites from escaping in former times. So, with "Freedom" as their watchword, they left the banks of the Nile, and came to the unknown wilderness on the long journey to the Land of Promise, their future home in Canaan.

PART IV.—THE PASSAGE OF THE RED SEA

THE nearest way from Egypt to Canaan is along a line which goes eastward. If the Israelites had gone by this way they would have had to pass through the land of warlike enemies, and they would have been in a worse plight than before; for they had not been trained in the use of arms.

Besides this, the Israelites had to go through a hard schooling before they were ready to enter the promised land. They had many great lessons to learn, and many great hardships to overcome, and many great deeds to do, before they were fit for a country and a settled home of their own,

and fit for the future greatness promised by God.

By God's command, Moses led the people on a march which seemed to take them away from the country they wished to reach. God guided them in a wonderful way. He caused a pillar of cloud to move before them during the day. At night the cloud glowed with fire, so that it served as a light as well as a guide.

At length they reached an arm of the Red Sea. They halted and set up their tents by the shore to enjoy a welcome rest. But it was not long before terrible news reached them. Pharaoh was following with his army.

When the Israelites began their march, the King expected to see them back in a few days; but when he found that the slaves were escaping, his anger was great. He was glad when he heard that they had turned southward, for he thought that they had lost their way.

So he gathered his army and set out after the Israelites, hoping to bring them back again to slavery. What chance had the

Israelites against the army of Egypt? In front of them was the sea. Behind them, in the distance, the clouds of dust showed that the Egyptians were marching towards them. Here they were a helpless crowd, men, women and children, with tents and baggage and cattle mixed up in disorder. They were in despair. In bitterness they said to Moses, "Were there no graves in Egypt? Why have you brought us here to die?"

But there was no despair in the heart of Moses. He answered them with words of comfort and hope. "Fear not," he said; "stand firm, and you shall see how God will save you. The Lord shall fight for you, and you shall hold your peace."

Clearer still was the call to action that came from God when Moses asked for help. The answer came—

"Why do you cry unto Me? Speak to the Children of Israel, that they go forward."

These are great words! When sorrow and trouble come to us, it is no use standing still and wringing our hands. We must do what we can to help ourselves. We must go forward.

Yet how could the Israelites go forward, when the sea lay before them? But God had spoken. He would clear the way for them. The people broke up their camp and went towards the water's edge. Night was coming on. As the darkness fell on the land there were strange sounds in the air. Were these the faint echoes of the battle-cries of the Egyptians? they must have asked as they stood clasping their dear ones in their arms. Or was it only the moaning of the wind? Sure enough, a great storm was rising. The wind began to moan and shriek. Wild waves tossed and rolled about. The frightened people looked at Moses. There he stood calmly, and as they pressed towards him he lifted his rod and pointed it across the sea.

Then the people saw that the wind was forcing back the waves. There appeared in front of them a strip of sand growing ever wider. Here, indeed, was the way of escape. Eagerly they pressed forward, and the whole multitude passed over in safety.

Pharaoh and his host came up only to find that the Israelites had gone forward. The

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army soon found the sandy path, and with fierce war-shouts pressed onward. Pharaoh thought he would soon be upon the Israelites. With their women and their children and their cattle they could not escape his swift horsemen.

But earlier that night another wonderful thing had happened, which hindered the Egyptians. The pillar of cloud had changed its place and had come between the two hosts, and it gave light only on the side where the Israelites were. The Egyptians were left in darkness. Now the wheels of the chariots sank into the sands and could only move slowly. The soldiers were afraid and began to waver. "Let us go back," said they, "for the Lord fights for Israel."

But it was too late! At God's command Moses lifted his rod once more, and lo! the wind died down and the waters rushed back over the sandy path. The Egyptians tried to turn back, but the waves swept over them, and not one escaped.

When day dawned the Israelites looked across the sea shining in the morning light. There was no sign of their enemy, except

"THE WIND DIED DOWN AND THE WATERS RUSHED BACK"

the drowned bodies of the soldiers carried to the shore by the tide.

The hearts of the Israelites turned to God in thankfulness and they sang a song of triumph which you may read for yourselves in the Bible or in the Prayer Book. It begins with the words—

"I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath been highly exalted:
The horse and his rider hath He cast into the sea."

It was indeed a triumph. Pharaoh in his pride had asked, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice?" In his last awful moments, he knew the answer.

All the might of Egypt, the spearmen and horsemen and chariots could not help him. At the breath of the Almighty they melted away. The spirit of Egypt, which took no heed of blood and tears, was humbled before the living God. Its downfall is a lesson to the people of all ages.

PART V.—THE GREAT MARCH

Now began the most famous march in the history of the world. Day after day, week after week, month after month, for forty long years, the Israelites wandered through the wilderness towards the land of their desire. At night they pitched their tents where they stood, and in the morning they folded them up again and went forward. Sometimes they halted for a long rest or for some great purpose.

They had to face great hardships. On the scorching sands they often suffered from thirst. They felt pangs of hunger. But God in His mercy never failed them. He showed Moses how to get pure, fresh water; and during the whole of their journey He provided food in the form of a sweet substance something like honey but much harder. The people found it on the ground in the morning, and they called it "manna."

The Israelites were not easy to manage, for in many ways they were like wilful children, easily turned to joy or to tears, and, sad to say, even to wrong-doing. They often

grumbled against Moses, but he was always patient. He was always ready to help, to comfort and cheer them as they struggled forward and onward.

The Bible says, "Not by bread alone shall a man live." This means that eating, drinking, and enjoying ourselves are not the only things of which we should think. Life has higher duties. It was of these duties that God told Moses to teach the people.

First of all, after only three months of journeying, the Children of Israel were led to Mount Sinai. There, amid great storms and thunder and lightning, they heard the voice of God speaking the words of the Ten Commandments, which have become the chief laws of the people of the whole world. Then followed other laws which came from God through the mouth of the great leader.

Moses taught the people to love and serve the true God, and to keep in the path of right. He built a beautiful tabernacle for them, where, by the power of their united prayer, they could lift their souls towards their Maker.

He commanded them to keep the Sabbath

and the holy days, so that their minds would be turned to thoughts of God and His everlasting goodness.

He called on them to love and honour their parents, to do their duty to their fellow-men and to show kindness to the poor and the needy, the widow and the fatherless. He ordered them to live clean and healthy lives, and warned them against anger and spite, envy, dishonesty and untruth.

He bade them deal kindly with their servants and with the strangers who came to live amongst them, and not to be cruel to animals. He taught them to love justice, and in doing justice always to be merciful.

All these and many other laws you will one day be able to read for yourselves in the Bible.

Moses appointed judges to see that these laws were carried out, and that there was justice between a man and his neighbour.

There was other work which Moses had to do. The people who came out of Egypt were unarmed and undrilled. There was little law and order among them.

Yet on their journey they had to fight

against warlike enemies. The men had to be drilled and armed. They were divided into companies under captains and leaders, and they learned to obey commands and go forward with stout hearts when ordered to do so. Such spirit did Moses put into his soldiers, that they fought and conquered fierce nations that came to destroy them.

In the fortieth year the people reached the river Jordan, over which they had to pass before they could enter Canaan. The Israelites had now grown into an orderly people, knowing how to act together for the good of all.

The task of Moses was nearly done, and the day was coming when he was to pass away. He chose Joshua, his trusty captain, to lead the people into the land. He then wrote down all the laws which God had commanded him to teach. He called the people together, and warned them of the evils which would befall them if they did wrong, and showed them the blessings that would come to them if they kept to the path of right.

He wrote a beautiful song which the people were to sing in the years to come. It

would remind them of the greatness of God and of His tender mercies towards them in the days of old. In his last words he blessed the people he loved so much, and for whom he had lived and toiled and struggled.

Then God bade Moses to go up to the top of Mount Pisgah. There he would be able to see the land which was to be given to the Israelites. So, alone, Moses climbed the mountain, and from the top he looked over the land, from the Jordan to the waters of the great sea, over its green hills and pleasant valleys, its brooks and its streams and its

flowing rivers, its forests and its pastures, its fruit gardens and its golden cornfields.

As he gazed upon this lovely scene, it gradually faded from his sight, for the shadow of death enfolded him. The pure soul of the faithful servant returned to his Master. The great captain was dead. From the people in the valley below there rose up the voice of weeping and wailing and mourning.

No friend was with him to hold his dying hand or close his eyes, but God Himself was with him. He buried Moses on a lonely spot at the foot of the hill, and no man knows the place of his grave.

So died the greatest man that ever lived. He was the deliverer of the Israelites, their teacher, their lawgiver and their general. He had turned them from slaves into a great and holy nation. He was the servant and the messenger of God. Though he did so much for his brethren, he was one of the humblest of men. Above everything else, he was unselfish. He asked nothing for himself, but always worked for the good of others.

The empire of Egypt, against which he struggled, has passed from the earth. The temples and the palaces and the idols are now nothing but crumbling stones with boastful writings, which seem to mock at the former glory. Moses needs no monument with carved writings. His work lives for ever in the hearts of men. The bodies of the kings and the princes and the rulers of ancient Egypt are to be seen as mummies in museums, where they lie bare to the idle gaze of them that pass. Moses sleeps undisturbed in the lonely mountain-valley, but his spirit and his law have filled the world.

STORIES ABOUT MOSES

I

In one of our books written in olden times, called the Midrash, we find these two stories of Moses.

Once, before he was three years old, he was brought to the chamber of King Pharaoh. The Princess was sitting at her father's side and the child was on her knee. You know that little children like to catch hold of things around them. Moses was the same as other children. He looked at the crown on the King's head, took it off and then placed it on his own head.

The King was angry, and so were all the nobles who stood around. They wondered what was the meaning of this childish act.

The King called his wise men together to say what should be done to Moses. Some thought he should be put to death for daring to take the King's crown.

In the end it was settled that Moses should be put to a test.

A precious stone and a burning ember were

placed before him. If he took the jewel he would be put to death. If he chose the burning ember, it would prove he did not know what he was doing when he placed the crown on his head, and he would be spared.

Everyone stood round to see which he would take. At once his hand shot forth to take the jewel, but an angel of God was watching over him and turned his hand to the burning ember.

The little fellow seized it, and, just like a child, carried it to his mouth and burnt his tongue. It is said that it was for this reason that Moses was slow of speech.

II

After Moses had grown up, and had left Egypt, he watched over the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, with a loving care that showed how fit he was to become the shepherd of a great people.

Once a lamb strayed from the flock and wandered away. In the midst of his own troubled thoughts of the hard and bitter lives of his brethren in Egypt, he did not lose sight

of his duty towards this helpless little lamb. He watched it and followed it. Although it climbed into rough places hard to reach, he kept up with it. He saw how it stopped at all the water-courses to find some drink, and he said, "Poor lamb, I did not know you were thirsty." Seeing how tired the little creature was, Moses lifted it up and carried it over the stones and the rocks safely home again.

Then God saw that if Moses had such pity on the dumb animals belonging to man, he was fit to be a shepherd of the flock of God, the leader of God's own people, Israel.

THE SHEPHERD WHO SANG BEFORE A KING

After the death of Moses, Joshua led the Israelites with victory into Canaan, where they settled down to live. Many years afterwards, they had their own kings. The first king was Saul. In his reign there lived a handsome lad named David, the son of Jesse, who helped to look after the sheep of his father among the wild hills of Bethlehem. It was hard to find food for them, for there was much rocky and sandy ground where nothing grew; and David led the flocks far away where there was grass for them to eat and water for them to drink.

As he kept watch he loved to listen to the song of the birds. To him there seemed to be music also in the sound of the wind and the rustling of the leaves on the tree. When he and his sheep were hot and tired after a long journey in the sun, how sweet seemed the murmur of the fresh waters of a stream

running down the side of the hill! In all this music he seemed to hear voices telling of the wonders of the world and the goodness of God. He loved to play on his harp and sing beautiful songs that he himself had composed.

In those days he also learned to use the shepherd's sling, from which a stone could be sent flying with great speed. He had watched the men of the tribe of Benjamin who were such fine marksmen that they could "sling at a hair's-breadth and not miss." He tried with all his might, and did not rest until he could aim at a mark and hit it every time. How useful this was to him, you will hear later.

All the time he had to be watchful, brave and strong, for wild beasts prowled about among the lonely hills, ready to carry off a stray lamb. Once he heard a cry of fear among the sheep, and when he looked, he saw a lion among them carrying off a lamb. He did not think of his own safety, but boldly ran and struck the lion a heavy blow on the head and saved the lamb. The lion turned on him, but he fought it and killed it.

At another time he killed a bear which came stealing down from the hills of Judea.

How happy he must have felt when he had the sheep all safely back again in the fold at night! Then perhaps he would look up to the starry heavens and sing, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." Other shepherds would come from over the hills and listen to him, for his songs would cheer them when they felt weary.

About this time there was trouble in the camp of the King. Saul had become very sad and unhappy. Day after day he sat alone in his tent looking dark and gloomy.

His ministers were afraid to go near him, for he had fits of anger. But still they wished to help him. At last they plucked up courage, and went before him and said—

"Behold, an evil spirit troubleth thee. Let us seek out a skilful player on the harp, and he shall play before thee and thou shalt be well."

This seemed to bring hope to the King, and he asked them to find him such a man. The ministers were very glad to see that they had roused up their master. One of them

who came from Bethlehem told of the shepherd lad, out there on the hills, who was known for his skill on the harp. So Saul sent messengers with the command to Jesse, "Send to me David thy son, who is with the sheep."

David, with his beloved harp on his back and with beating heart, set out on his journey to Gibeah, where Saul was in his camp.

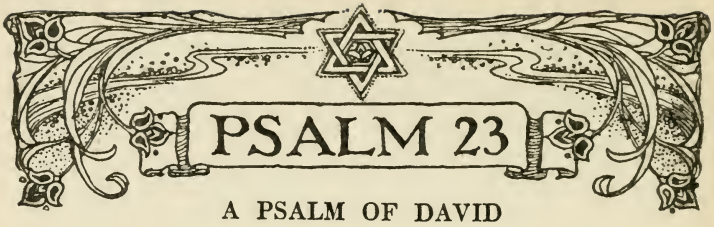
He was taken into a large tent with gold and purple hangings, and there in the dim light he

saw the King sitting sad and silent and with bent head. David moved his fingers across the strings of the harp and drew forth magic music. Just as a ray of sunshine comes through a black cloud, so David seemed to bring into the darkness, the brightness of the sunlit fields, the song of the birds, the music of the wind and the murmur of the waters of the stream on the hillside; and in this way the King's cares were driven away by the song of the shepherd boy.

The King felt a great love for the bright-eyed, handsome, happy lad and said, "Let David stay with me, for he hath found favour in my sight."

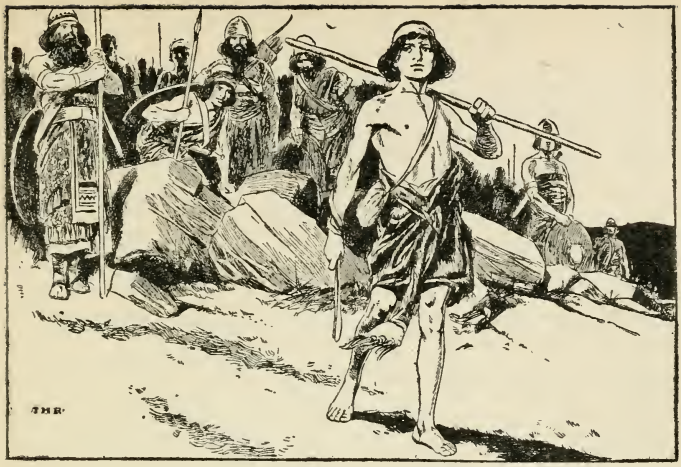
So David was made the King's armour-bearer and he was always near, ready to cheer his master with music when the evil spirit troubled him.

When Saul was well again, he did not need the music, and David was no longer wanted at the camp. After a time the lad went back to watch his father's sheep once again on the wild hills of Bethlehem.



A PSALM OF DAVID

THE Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
He leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul:
He guideth me in straight paths for His name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil;
For Thou art with me:
Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:
Thou hast anointed my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:
And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.



DAVID AND GOLIATH

FAITH IN GOD THE GREATEST HELP

THERE came a time when David was able to make good use of his quick eye, his steady hand and his straight, true aim.

War had broken out. The Israelites were in danger, for an army of Philistines had come to conquer their land and make slaves of them. The fighting men of Israel had come together to save their homes from the fierce enemy.

The army of Saul was encamped on one hill and the Philistines were on another hill. Between them was a valley with a stream running through it.

Among the Philistines was a man named Goliath. He was so tall and strong that he was really a giant. He was more than nine feet high and he had great, broad shoulders. The metal armour which he wore was so heavy that it would have crushed another man to the ground, and he carried a huge spear and a heavy sword. Day after day he came from the ranks of the Philistines and offered to fight any Israelite who would come out and do battle with him.

We speak of such a battle as a single combat. It often took place in olden days when armies were at war. A champion picked from one side went to fight a champion from the opposite side.

"Choose a man," Goliath would roar, "and let him come down to me. If he kill me, then will we be your servants; but if I kill him, then shall you be our slaves and serve us."

There was no man in Israel who was a match for him, and there came no answer to his words. Then he would mock at them and shout—

"I defy the armies of Israel."

In the army of Saul were the three elder brothers of David. Jesse was much troubled about his soldier sons and longed to have news of them. So he asked David to take them some food and find out how they were getting on.

Early one morning David set out for the camp. On arriving, he was about to speak to his brothers, when the giant came forward again with his mocking and boastful words. David looked on with wonder. He asked many questions of the soldiers round about him. They told him that Saul had promised that the man who would kill the giant would receive great riches and would also be given the King's daughter as his wife; but there was no one strong enough to go forth. David was angry and said—

"How dare this Philistine defy the army of the living God?"

When David's eldest brother, Eliab, heard his words he was vexed with him. Perhaps he felt ashamed on hearing this fearless speech from David when all others were so faint-hearted. So he said—

"What right have you to come here instead

of looking after the sheep? You are proud and headstrong and have only come here to see the battle."

It is sad to think that some boys do speak in anger to their younger brothers when they ought to speak gently and try to help them.

But David, though strong and brave, had no wish to be rude to his brother. His mind was set on a greater task. So he answered quietly—

"What harm have I done? I have only asked a question." David's words were passed from man to man. At last it came to the King's ears that someone had been found who seemed willing to go out to fight Goliath. Saul at once sent for him. By the time David came before the King, he had made up his mind.

"My lord King," said he, "let no one fear. I will go forth and fight this Philistine."

When Saul looked at the slender youth he said, "Thou art not able to go against this Philistine, for thou art but a boy and he has been a man of war from his youth."

David did not wish to boast, but there comes a time when we must speak out and say what

we can do. So David told how he had fought and killed a lion and a bear whilst he was minding his father's sheep. To show that he did not trust only in his own strength he said—

"The Lord who saved me from the lion and the bear will save me from the hand of this Philistine." Faith in God was David's greatest help.

"Go," said the King, "and the Lord be with you."

Saul wished to put his own armour upon David, and give him his own sword, but David was not used to armour and had not been trained to handle a sword. So he very wisely refused to take them. He would have had no chance if he had gone in heavy armour to fight at close quarters.

Taking his shepherd's stick and his trusty sling he stepped out boldly into the valley. As he passed the stream he picked up some smooth stones. He put one in his sling and the rest into his bag.

What a strange sight it must have been to see a mere boy going out to meet the terrible giant with his great sword and spear and his

"INSTANTLY DAVID SPRANG UPON HIM"

heavy armour! What an unequal match it seemed! But there was no fear in David as he strode out with a firm and steady step, and with his keen, quick, sure eye fixed on Goliath.

The giant stared at him in surprise, and in a mocking voice, he cried, "Am I a dog that thou comest to me with a stick? Come here and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field."

But David answered, "Thou comest armed with a spear and a sword, but I come armed with faith. I come in the name of the Lord of Hosts."

Then, as the giant rushed toward him with uplifted sword, David took his sling and sent a stone flying swiftly through the air, straight at the giant's forehead. The monster fell to the ground with a mighty crash. Instantly David sprang upon him, seized his sword and cut off his head.

Great was the fear that fell upon the Philistines when they saw their champion suddenly fall. They turned and ran away, while the army of Israel came charging across the valley and drove their enemies headlong before them. It was a proud moment for

David when he was brought before Saul after the battle. He said in answer to a question, "I am the son of Jesse." He knew how happy his father would be to hear of the great deed of his son.

Some years later, Saul was killed in battle, and David became King in his stead.

THE HOLY SABBATH

If you were asked which day of the week you liked best, you would, of course, say, "The Sabbath." On that day you have no lessons to do, and you wear your best clothes. There is a pleasant service in the Synagogue, and your home looks brighter than usual. The day puts fresh life into you and gives you a happy feeling. All this is as it should be, for God wishes us to be happy on this day.

The Sabbath has been given to us in love by God to help us to live good and happy lives. There are many verses in the Bible which teach us how to keep the Sabbath. There is one whole commandment about it.

The word "Sabbath" means "day of rest." The Sabbath is as old as the world. It was fixed by God just after He had made the heavens and the earth and everything that is in them, and when He Himself ceased from His work.

It is not easy for children to understand the blessing of rest. You do not work very hard, though some of you *think* you do. But you

have a tiring day sometimes. Perhaps your lessons have been hard, or you have been running about more than usual. You feel, oh! so tired, and, perhaps, a bit cross. Yet after a rest, how much brighter you are!

But when we grow up, we have to work hard every day. We are often overworked, and unhappy because things do not seem to go right. At such times we may become ill-tempered and have no thought for words and deeds of kindness. What a sad place the world would be if people were always like this! Love would die and there would be no joy in life.

The Sabbath makes life sweeter. On that holy day we can turn aside from the rush and worry of life, and rest in God-given peace, so that we may be fresh and ready to begin our work again with a new spirit.

The very commandment which teaches us to rest on the Sabbath, says, "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work." Work, too, is holy. We should all feel proud of having a useful part to play in the world. Work itself is a great blessing, so long as it goes with proper rest.

We are commanded to keep the Sabbath day holy, that is, to give up some part of the day to thoughts of God. Of course, no good child will ever let *any* day pass without turning its heart to God in prayer. But on the Sabbath, we have more time for prayer and more time to think of loving and serving God.

The keeping of this day binds all Jews together in brotherhood. God tells us, "It is a sign between Me and the Children of Israel for ever." Wherever Jews have gone to live, they join together on this day for prayer.

The Sabbath goes hand in hand with kindness. The Bible tells us that not only should we ourselves rest on that day, but everyone in our household, our servants and even our cattle. We are told also, how, when many of the people did not heed the Sabbath, they grew hard and cruel. They robbed the poor and the widow and the fatherless. From cruelty they went on to other wickedness, and brought suffering not only on themselves but on the whole of the Jews.

To keep the Sabbath in the right way, we

must be ready to give up something or make some sacrifice, as it is called. We must be ready to give up the gain that would come from working on that day. We must give up some of the pleasures and the comforts that come from the work of others, but which we may enjoy on the week-days.

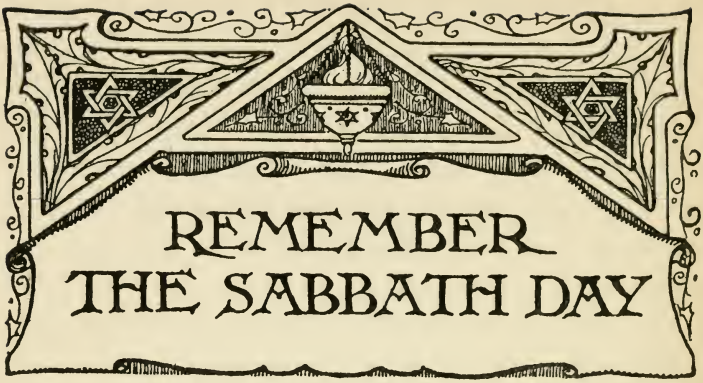
We often speak of the Sabbath as a precious jewel, such as a pearl or a diamond which is set in gold. The home customs by which we show honour to the day form a beautiful setting for the Sabbath jewel. The house is made specially clean and bright. A white cloth is kept on the table. Under a smaller white cloth are two *challas*. They remind us of the double portion of manna which the Israelites in the wilderness gathered on the sixth day, so that they could rest from this labour on the seventh day. There are the lighted candles on Friday night which make the home so bright and cheerful to greet the beloved visitor—the Sabbath.

In many homes on the Sabbath eve, when the father comes home from Synagogue, the first thing he does is to put his hands on the heads of his children and ask God to bless

them. Then, holding up a cup of wine, he recites *Kiddush*, the prayer of sanctification, or making holy. He blesses God, Who has taken pleasure in us, and Who, in love and in favour, has given us the holy Sabbath. After supper there are, in addition to the grace, joyous songs of praise.

After sunset, when the Sabbath is over, there is the *Habdalah*, the prayer which marks the division between that day and the six working days. There is the candle which reminds us that God first made light when He created the world; the wine-cup filled to overflowing, the sign of God's rich blessings; and the scented spices with which we bid a fond good-bye to the sweetness of the holy day.

How thankful we should be for this day with its sweet calm and its lovely home customs. It joins the family together in love, and all Jews together in brotherhood. Let us honour it, for it is a crown of glory. It is a day of light and love, of kindness and tenderness, of holiness and rest. "They who keep the Sabbath and take a delight in it, shall rejoice in the Kingdom of God."



KEEP the Sabbath holy, keep the day of rest.
Love and peace and gladness dwell within each breast.
Think not of your troubles, think not of your cares,
Sacrifice your pleasures, offerings bring in prayers.
'Twas the Lord God blessed it—so His praise proclaim.
Remember ye the Sabbath, keep it in His name.

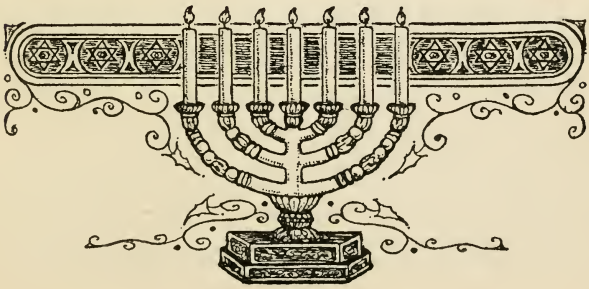
Six days shalt thou labour, on the seventh cease,
Thou and all thy household shall go forth in peace;

Call the children round thee, read to them God's word,
How the mountain thundered, how the people heard.
'Twas the Lord God blessed it—so His praise proclaim.
Remember ye the Sabbath, keep it in His name.

Let us not neglect it, let the Sabbath day
Satisfy and comfort all beneath its sway.
When we rest from labour others too shall rest;
Thus we keep it holy, obeying God's behest.
'Twas the Lord God blessed it—so His praise proclaim.
Remember ye the Sabbath, keep it in His name.

Re Henry.

From "Young Israel."



THE LOVELIEST BIRTHDAY PARTY

PART I

Most of you have had a birthday party. You have then enjoyed yourselves very much with nice tea and cake, and fruit and sweets, and singing and games.

Can you remember having a birthday party when your father and your mother, and perhaps some of your uncles and your aunts, and even your grandfather and your grandmother, joined in the songs with the children?

Perhaps you will smile and shake your head at this question, and wonder what it means. Just think! Your father, or your grandfather, sat at the head of the table with a book in which there were stories and songs. Each of the others round the table had a book like it, so that they, too, could read the stories and sing the songs.

On the table were lighted candles; and a bottle of wine—perhaps more than one bottle; and parsley and green vegetables; and the

roasted bone of a lamb; and a roasted egg; and chopped apples and almonds mixed into a paste with wine; and in front of each happy face there was also—

"A glass of wine!" you will shout, for you have nearly guessed what the question means. But you are still puzzled, and say—

"That was not a birthday party at all. You are telling us of *Seder* nights, the first two nights of *Pesach*."

Quite right, we are speaking of *Seder* nights. But what is this talk about a birthday party? We shall see.

You know that *Pesach*, or Passover, is kept in memory of the Israelites being brought out from Egypt. You have already read how hard and bitter were the lives of the Israelites in that land, and how Moses was sent to save them. In Egypt they were slaves. A slave belonged to his master, just as an ox or a sheep or a horse. His wife and children were also slaves.

There have sometimes been kind masters, but more often there have been cruel masters, who have whipped their slaves and made them toil till they could not stand.

Such were the Egyptian masters. They showed no pity and no mercy to the Israelites. From morning till night the Israelites were made to toil. They were crowded together in misery. They could not choose their own way of living nor turn to any work they liked. They were without the joys and comforts of a home. They could have no happiness in their children. They could only look at them with pitying eyes, knowing the cruel fate that was in store for them. They dared not even speak their own bitter thoughts, for fear that their words would come to the ears of their masters, who would answer them with whips, if not with death.

When they escaped from this life of misery, the world seemed altogether changed. Life had a sweetness in it that they had never known before. The fresh air, the sunshine, the clouds, the skies and the stars had a new beauty. All nature seemed to sing a joyous song. The mountains and hills seemed to dance to the music of freedom. "The mountains skipped like rams and the hills like lambs," says one of the Psalms, speaking of those times.

It is true that the Israelites still had to face great hardships, but they faced them willingly as free men. The day on which they came out of Egypt saw the birth of a new spirit in them; on that day a free nation was born.

PART II

Now what do you mean when you speak of a birthday party? You mean that you are having a happy little gathering of your friends on a date which is the same as that on which you were born some years before. This date is called an anniversary. Your birthday is the anniversary of the day on which you were born. You love to "keep it up," as you say. But the anniversaries of other events are "kept up," and surely the anniversary of our nation being born is worth "keeping up."

You can now understand why we have called the *Seder* a birthday party. It is the grandest and the loveliest party you could ever imagine. It is the anniversary of the birth of a nation which gave to the world a message of freedom.

Not so very long ago all the great nations made up their minds that there should be no more slavery in the world, but it was the Israelites who first set up freedom as a great duty of their religion.

But the *Seder* birthday gathering is different from all others. There is a beautiful idea in everything we do. The word *Seder* means "order." Everything that we do on the night is done in a fixed order.

The festival is called Passover because just before the death of the firstborn of the Egyptians, the Israelites were commanded to kill a lamb and sprinkle the blood on their doors, so that the Angel of Death would *pass over* their houses, and leave them unhurt when he came to slay the Egyptians. The roasted bone on the table reminds us of this lamb.

We are commanded to eat *Matzos* or unleavened bread during this Festival. This is bread which is baked quickly before it has time to rise. We must not eat leaven or anything that has touched leaven. For this reason, Passover is also called the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The *Matzos* remind us of

SEDER NIGHT

the bread of sorrow which our forefathers ate in Egypt, and also of the unleavened bread which they ate when they marched out of the land in great haste. Three *Matzos* are put on the *Seder* table between white cloths.

On the table, too, we have bitter herbs, which we eat to remind us of the bitter lives of our forefathers in Egypt.

The book which we read on *Seder* night is called the *Hagadah*, which means "telling," because it tells the story of the Passover.

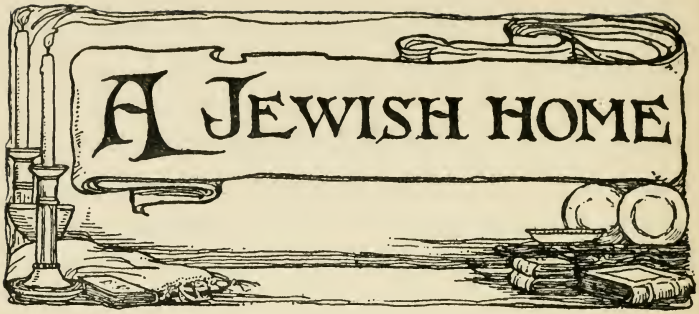
We all enjoy a meal in the midst of the service. It is the custom to invite the poor and the stranger to the *Seder*. Jewish servants sit down to table with their masters as a sign of the freedom and the brotherhood of all.

It is a great night for the children. We are told in the Bible to teach our children all about the Passover.

The youngest child sitting at the table recites *Ma Nishtana*, which asks the reason for the things we do. Then comes the answer from the head of the family, who tells the story. Then follow prayers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving. Late in the evening,

when tired little heads begin to nod and sleepy little eyes begin to blink, there are merry songs to keep the children awake.

This, then, is the birthday party which the Jews have kept for thousands of years on every anniversary of their escape from Egypt. It joins our lives with the lives of our forefathers, who came out of Egypt to lift on high the flag of freedom before the eyes of all peoples, and to tell the world that God judges all nations, that no nation can ill-treat another nation without being punished for it, and that mankind has the right to be free.



I THINK that it is very fine
To have a Jewish home like mine,
Where every Friday evening shine
  The lovely Sabbath lights.
To bless them, mother hides her face;
And loaves and wine at father's place
For *Kiddush* stand, and books for grace
  That each of us recites.

I have a mother kind and sweet,
Who keeps her things for milk and meat
Each in its place and each complete,
  Arranged on separate shelves,
And *Pesach* dishes bright and clean,
That only once a year are seen,
And gladly wait the months between
  In places by themselves.

When I am grown and married, too,
I know exactly what I'll do,
Because, you see, I am a Jew,
  And mother teaches me:
I, too, shall bless the Sabbath light,
And keep my dishes clean and bright,
And teach my children what is right,
  And what a home should be.

"Around the Year in Rhymes": Jessie Sampter.
(Bloch Publishing Company. New York.)

SHABUOTH

THE FEAST OF WEEKS

DEEP down in the hearts of all people there is a strong love of nature. We love the fields, the flowers, the trees, the woods, the birds, the blue sky, the silvery clouds, the bright sunshine, the hills, the streams and the sweet, fresh air. We always find something in our religion that answers to every feeling that comes from our hearts; something that gives us a way of showing these feelings and offering our thanks to God above.

After hard work we love rest and peace; the answer comes in the shape of the holy Sabbath. All people are drawn towards freedom; we have the Passover when we give voice to this feeling. So in the early summer, when Nature, after its winter sleep, awakes to full life and beauty, we can show our joy by keeping the Feast of *Shabuoth*.

Shabuoth means "weeks," and you shall hear why it is called by that name.

In the Holy Land, the barley ripens at Passover. In olden times, a measure of barley,

called an "omer," was brought to the Temple as an offering on the second day of that festival. The Israelites were commanded to count the days from that day onward for seven weeks, or forty-nine days, and on the fiftieth day, to keep the Feast of Weeks, or, as it is also called, the Festival of the Wheat Harvest. By that time, after the seven weeks of working and watching and counting of days, all the golden corn, with God's blessing, had become ripe and full, and all the reaping had been finished.

It is not hard to understand the meaning of this counting of days. Each day had its task; no day could be wasted; one day lost could never come back. The days of the harvest were all needed. They were busy days and not days on which to be idle. At evening in the Holy Land, the master of the house called his family and his workers together. After blessing God, he would say, "This is the tenth day since the Omer," or "This is the twentieth day since the Omer," as the case might be.

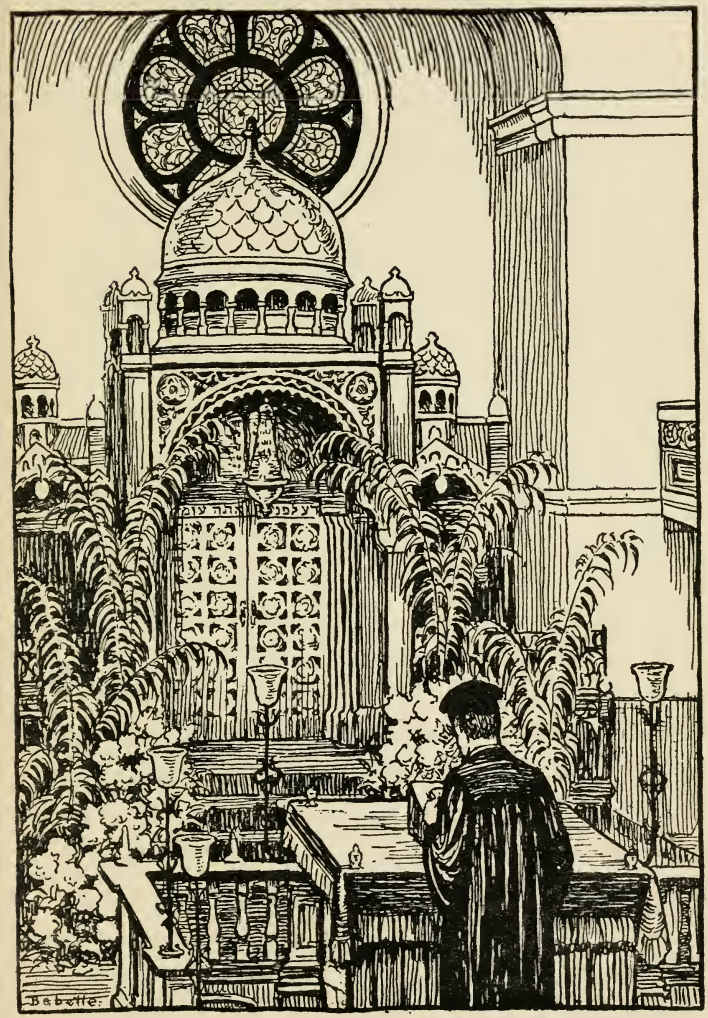
These words were a reminder to all that the work had to go steadily forward, and a

warning against delay. They were also words of hope. They showed that the day was coming nearer when the work would be finished and the harvest gathered in. We still count the days of the "Omer." Though we may not be farmers, the counting has the same lesson for us—that time is precious and that we must make the best use of it.

This festival is also known as the "Day of the First Ripe Fruits," because, in the days of old, bread made from the new wheat was brought into the Temple as a thank-offering to God.

We live in a country where the wheat ripens many months later than it does in the Holy Land. In this way the festival has lost much of the glory that it had for our forefathers. But at this time, we bring into the Synagogue plants and flowers to make the house of God look more beautiful, and to remind us of the rich gifts of Nature that come of the blessing of God.

In one way *Shabuoth* is as much to us as it was to our forefathers. It is the anniversary of the greatest event that has happened, not only in our own history, but

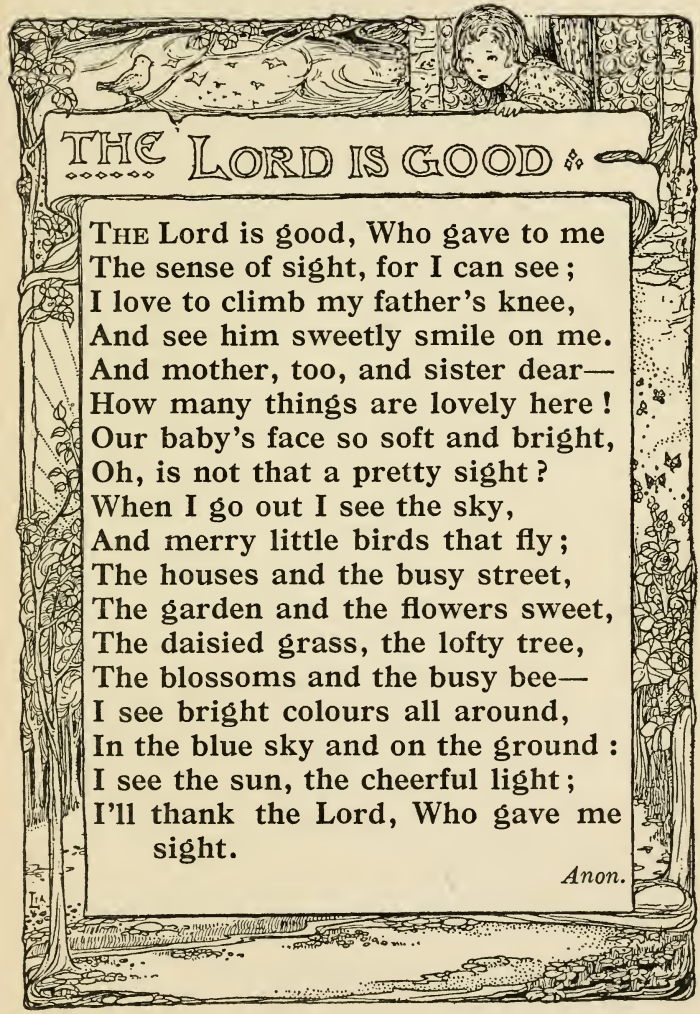


THE SYNAGOGUE DECORATED WITH PLANTS AND FLOWERS

in the history of mankind. It was the time of the giving of the Ten Commandments to the Children of Israel, who heard the voice of God on Mount Sinai speaking the everlasting words.

This event meant much to the world and more still to the Israelites. It was the only time in all the ages when the living voice of God was heard by a whole multitude. The words spoken at that moment were a clear call to the world full of wickedness and cruelty, that the love of God, goodness, purity, truth, kindness and justice must come before everything else in life. To the Israelites it meant, too, that they had been chosen by God to spread this message among all peoples.

So it is right that we should turn to Him with thankful hearts on this Feast of *Shabuoth*, the Harvest Festival, the Time of Giving of the Law, when the earth is decked in clothes of the richest colours, the sun shines its brightest, the flowers send forth their sweetest scent, the birds sing their happiest songs, and, indeed, when all the works of His hand are praising the living God.



THE LORD IS GOOD

THE Lord is good, Who gave to me
The sense of sight, for I can see;
I love to climb my father's knee,
And see him sweetly smile on me.
And mother, too, and sister dear—
How many things are lovely here!
Our baby's face so soft and bright,
Oh, is not that a pretty sight?
When I go out I see the sky,
And merry little birds that fly;
The houses and the busy street,
The garden and the flowers sweet,
The daisied grass, the lofty tree,
The blossoms and the busy bee—
I see bright colours all around,
In the blue sky and on the ground:
I see the sun, the cheerful light;
I'll thank the Lord, Who gave me
sight.

Anon.

STORIES FROM THE TALMUD

I.—HILLEL

THE other books that we have, besides the Bible, were written by Jews known as Rabbis. They studied the laws of God and taught them to the Jews. They helped to guide and to judge the people, who had much respect for them. Often they were poor, and earned their living in a humble way. They did their holy work not for money, but because they loved their God and their religion.

Much that they taught has been written down; and so we have many books which help to show the meaning and the beauty of all that is in the Bible. The books give very fully, laws which have been built up from the Law of Moses. In these books, too, we find what the great teachers said in the schools. Their sayings were written down either by themselves or by the hands of some of their loving pupils. This vast collection of writings is called the Talmud.

The writing of these books took hundreds

of years. In them are to be found rich stores of knowledge, which was passed from mouth to mouth and handed down from father to son, and from teacher to pupil.

In the Talmud are to be found the following stories about Hillel. He is one of the best known of the Rabbis. When he was young he attended a school at Jerusalem. Each of the pupils had to pay a fee to the doorkeeper. Hillel was very poor. Once he had no money to pay this fee, and was shut out of the school. But he was eager to learn. Although it was bitterly cold, he climbed up to the window and listened to the teaching going on within.

As he sat listening he fell asleep. While he lay there the snow came down and covered him. The master and his pupils looked up to find out why it was so dark. They could not understand what was keeping the light from the window.

At last, to their surprise, they found Hillel asleep and half-frozen with the cold. They carried him in carefully and placed him near the fire. When he woke up he told them that he had been sitting outside in that bitter

weather in order to hear the lessons given in the school. From that time onward he was allowed to attend the school without any payment.

Hillel was a clever and hard-working pupil. He became famous for his learning and wisdom. He had a sweet temper. No one could make him angry, although many tried to do so.

Once a young man, who was not a Jew, came to try his patience. He knocked at the door of the school where Hillel was teaching, and when the Rabbi appeared, he said—

"Teach me all about the Jewish faith while I stand on one foot."

Some teachers would have shut the door in the face of such a pupil who really came to mock and not to learn. But the kindly Rabbi answered in his own sweet way—

"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. That is the chief part of the Jewish faith—now go away and study."

No wonder, when people wanted to praise a good-tempered man, they said he was as patient as Hillel.

II.—AN EMPEROR WHO WISHED TO SEE GOD

At the time when the Romans ruled over the Holy Land, their soldiers kept the country in order and forced the Jewish people to pay taxes to Rome.

The Roman rule was often harsh, and when the Jews rose up in arms against their masters, as they sometimes did, the Romans spared no cruelty to keep them down.

At times the Roman Emperors themselves would come to the Holy Land to see what was going on. They sometimes talked with famous Rabbis and asked questions about the Jewish religion.

The Romans believed in strange gods, and they could not understand the God of the Jews.

"Where is your God?" the Emperor Hadrian once asked a certain Rabbi named Joshua.

"God is everywhere," said the Rabbi.

"Show me your God," said the Emperor.

"God cannot be seen," replied the Rabbi.

"But I must see him," said the Emperor.

"Then first let me show you one of His messengers," was the answer. "Come with me."

The Rabbi then led the Emperor into the open air. It was midday and the sun was shining brightly on the earth.

"Look at the sun," said the Rabbi. The Emperor tried to do so, but in vain. His eyes were dazzled by its fierce rays. "I cannot gaze on the sun," said the Emperor.

"What?" said the Rabbi. "You cannot look on one of God's creatures? Then how can you look upon the Master Himself? No one can see God and live."

III.—THE RABBI AND THE PRINCESS

"*Look not at the flask, but at what is in it.*"

A STORY is told in the Talmud of a Roman Princess who was taught the truth of this saying in a clever way.

Among the advisers of her father, the Emperor, was an old Jewish Rabbi who was famed for his wisdom.

This Rabbi was not fair to look upon, although his mind was pure and upright, and goodness shone from his eyes. Indeed he was an ugly man. So well liked was he, that he was free to wander through the palace of the Emperor.

One day the Princess met him, and unkindly said, "How is it that such great wisdom can be contained in a body so ill-favoured?"

He said nothing at the time. Next day he asked the Princess about her father's wine. "I notice, Princess," said he, "that your father keeps his best wine in earthenware jars. Is it right that an Emperor's wine should be kept in this way? Should it not be kept in more precious vessels?"

The Princess thought he was in earnest.

She gave orders to her servants to pour a quantity of the wine into gold and silver vessels.

Soon after this, the Emperor gave a feast. He sent for the special wine, which, by his daughter's orders, had been poured into the new flasks. As was to be expected, the wine had turned sour.

When next the Princess met the Rabbi she told him sadly of what had happened.

"You have now learnt," said the Rabbi, "that wine keeps best in plain vessels, often stained and ill-looking. It is even so with wisdom, which is often found in people who have no claim to be called good-looking. On the other hand," he went on, looking straight at the Princess, "they who are beautiful are not always wise."

The Princess took the lesson to heart. She never again said an unkind word to him.

IV.—THE FOX AND THE GRAPES

Besides stories of people, there are in the Talmud fables about animals, which were told by the Rabbis in order to teach some useful lesson.

One of the fables tells of a fox which was passing near a vineyard. The fruit was just ripe, and as the fox came by, he looked at the rich grapes with longing.

Oh, if he could only come near enough to eat them! What a feast he would have! But the vineyard had a wall all round it to keep off such animals. Although there was an opening, it was too small for the fox to squeeze himself through, try as he might.

In vain he beat himself against the fence. He pushed and wriggled, but in no way could he enter.

He could not tear himself away. He waited a whole day, and then he tried again to enter.

His hunger and thirst grew sharper and sharper. He tried again to work his way into the vineyard, but he failed each time, and he lay panting outside.

A second day passed in the same way.

On the third day he had grown so thin with hunger that, at last, he was able to pass into the vineyard.

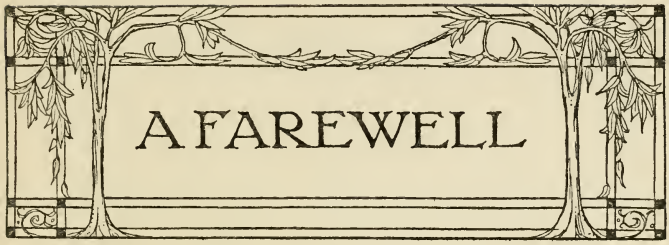
He greedily swallowed the fruit until he could eat no more. He became so fat again that, when he tried to leave the vineyard, he found that, once more, he could not go through the opening. So he had to wait again as he did before.

On the third day, weak and thin with hunger and thirst, he was able to crawl out.

He lay on the ground a sadder and wiser fox. He saw that he was in the same state as he was before he entered the vineyard.

This story teaches us that man comes into the world poor, and no matter what he may own during his passage through the vineyard of life, he must leave it in the end, as poor as when he entered it.

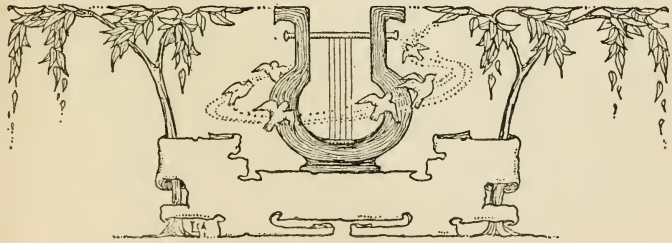
And so we ought to try our best to do good deeds, and say kind words, and think noble thoughts. Only such things are of account when our souls return to the Heavenly Father.



My fairest child, I have no song to give you;
No lark could pipe to skies so dull and grey;
Yet, ere we part, one lesson I can leave you
For every day.

Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever;
Do noble things, not dream them, all day long:
And so make life, death, and that vast for-ever
One grand, sweet song.

Charles Kingsley.



SUCCOTH

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

In the autumn we keep the Feast of *Succoth*, the last of the three chief festivals of the year. It is a festival of thanksgiving to God for His everlasting care of us and for the rich gifts that come from His hand in the things that grow on the earth.

The festival is also meant to remind us of the lives our forefathers lived after they left Egypt, when they toiled onward over the burning sand on the long journey to the Holy Land. They had no houses to shelter them. They had to live in tents, or in huts, which could be easily fixed up and easily taken down again. These huts gave but little shelter. But God was watching over the Israelites all the time. Without His love and care they would have died. To remind us of those times, we are commanded to live in huts during this festival. The word *Succoth* means "tabernacles" or "huts."

Nowadays, many Jews build huts in a

PREPARING THE SUCCAH

garden or on a roof. There they live for a good part of the time of the festival. Not everyone is lucky enough to be able to do this, but there is always a *Succah* near every Synagogue. There we can go and partly carry out the command.

These huts are very pretty. If you look at the roof you will notice that it is made of leaves. Through them you can see the sky and the stars. You may be sure that the covering would give us but poor shelter in a heavy rainfall. But the roof is made like this on purpose, so as to remind us that without the help of the Almighty there can never be any proper shelter for us. It also makes us think of the poor who have no houses at all, and of our duty to help those who are in need.

Succoth is also called the "Festival of Ingathering," and it is a time of rejoicing. It falls when all the fruits have ripened, when the apples and the pears, the plums and the oranges, the almonds and the citrons, the grapes and the olives, and the figs and the pomegranates are all gathered in.

For this reason, we have hanging from the

roof of the *Succah* many kinds of fruit. There are also good things on the table. When we taste them we have the joy of reciting a blessing to God in the *Succah*.

The Bible says, "Ye shall take unto you on the first day, the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and boughs of thick trees and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days." According to the meaning which the Rabbis have given to this command, we take into the Synagogue during this festival—

(1) a *Lulab*—branch of the palm tree,
(2) an *Ethrog*—citron,
(3) *Hadassim*—branches of the myrtle tree,
(4) *Aroboth*—branches of the willow,

and we hold them aloft during some of our prayers.

Our wise teachers have found beautiful meanings in the use of these four things. They have said that because the *Lulab* is lovely in shape and stands straight up, it reminds us of uprightness and duty. The *Ethrog* is beautiful in form and has a sweet smell. It stands for good deeds which

spread a fragrance all around. In a lesser way, the myrtle has also a sweet smell. Little deeds of kindness are as good in God's sight as great ones, so long as we do our best.

The leaves of the willow have no great beauty of form nor any sweetness of smell. Yet the willow has its own holy lessons for us. It teaches us to be humble. It teaches us, too, that we must be thankful for all God's gifts, even if some of them do not seem so beautiful in our eyes.

Still, though the leaves taken by themselves may not seem very beautiful, yet the whole tree looks lovely as it stands by the side of the river or stream. In the same way, when even the humblest people join together in serving God and doing kind deeds, they become a delight in His eyes.

At *Succoth* we come to the end of a great task in the service of God. Every Sabbath we read a part of the Five Books of Moses and we finish them at this season. The last day of the festival is called the "Rejoicing of the Law." On that day in the Synagogue, we read the last part of the fifth book, and we at once begin the first

book again with rejoicing and with new hope. The Law of Moses is the most precious thing we have. "It is a tree of life to them that grasp it, and they who keep it are happy. Its ways are the ways of pleasantness and all its paths are peace."

We make this day as happy as we can for you children. In you we place our hopes for the future. Having tried to do our part in upholding the Law of God, we are looking to you to do your part when our eyes are closed and our lips are sealed for ever.

We are looking to you to keep unbroken the golden thread of our history. We are looking to you to hand on, as your fathers have done, the faith which has held our people together through the ages that have gone, and which shall hold them together in the untold ages that are yet to come.

Evening Hymn

GOD, Who madest Earth and Heaven,
Darkness and Light;
Who the day for toil hast given,
For rest the night;
May Thine angel guards defend us,
Slumber sweet Thy mercy send us,
Holy dreams and hopes attend us,
This livelong night.

Reginald Heber.

CENTRAL CIRCULATION
CHILDREN'S ROOM